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OBJECTIVE RELATIVISM IN AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

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From the time the name was coined by A. E. Murphy and applied to the philosophies of John Dewey and A. N. Whitehead, "Objective Relativism" has freely circulated in the literature, but with a concomitant confusion and ambiguity. This dissertation seeks to provide a means of avoiding this confusion by setting forth a statement of Objective Relativism based upon an understanding of what Murphy named in Dewey and Whitehead, and viewing what he named in the perspective of philosophy in general.

This thesis holds that "Objective Relativism" identifies the answer certain American philosophies gave to the problem of the relation or integration of "subject" and "object" (or nature and mind, experience and nature, reason and nature, existence and inquiry, etc.). "Objective Relativism" is the name Murphy gave to the unique manner in which this problem was approached by Dewey and Whitehead, but it applies to other philosophies as well.

In the early American philosophy of this century two principal answers to the "subject-object" problem were enunciated, one by Neo-realism (monism) and the other by Critical Realism (dualism). But the answers tended to emphasize one term over the other with the result that in their extreme statements one term disappears. The "subject-object" integration by Neo-realism is primarily in terms of the object, thus it is often called "objectivism." It succeeded in demonstrating how objectivity was possible without mentalism, but it failed adequately to account for the possibility of error and illusion (relativity).

The answer of Critical Realism tended to the opposite extreme, describing the integration in terms of a "subject-object" dualism. In the end, the "object" disappears and a subjectivism results. Critical Realism established the importance of mind or "subject" (relativity) to objectivity.

For the early Objective Relativists (Experimental Pragmatists) it was a problem of "realism without monism or dualism," but their answer was a realism with monism and dualism. Instead of sacrificing either term, Objective Relativism sought to integrate "subject" and "object" (dualism and monism) by reconciling or synthesizing them. Its approach was through a critique of the abstractions common to the two realisms, plus a new emphasis on the importance of action or experiment.

In the Objective Relativism of Dewey and Whitehead, and in the writings by Murphy and others, there are at least two meanings of "relativism" that must be distinguished in order to see the unique contribution of Objective Relativism (the attempt to unite the two propositions of objectivity and relativity or subjectivity). One of these meanings is more crucial to the relativism of Objective Relativism than the other, although both imply one another. It is also shown that philosophical relativism and Relativity Theory may influence one another but are not the same thing.

There was as well a development toward Objective Relativism among certain realists also influenced by Hegelian Idealism. Realistic Objective Relativism is best exemplified by the "Perspective Realism" of E. B. McGilvary. To demonstrate these two parallel developments toward Objective Relativism--one in the language of context and function, the other in the language of perspective and structure--an exposition is included of various perspectival statements of Objective Relativism, especially that of McGilvary. The parallel developments are compared in their respective treatments of the problem of knowledge of the past--a crucial problem for Objective Relativism. Apart from the differences in their terminology (and the differences those entail), the two Objective Relativisms largely say the same thing. It is maintained that this demonstrates the inclusive nature of Objective Relativism and its desire to reconcile and integrate its philosophical inheritance.

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Table Of Contents

Chapter	Page
PREFACE	i
I. ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF OBJECTIVE RELATIVISM.	1
1. Neo-Realism	3
2. Critical Realism.	13
3. Experimental Pragmatism	32
II. THE RELATIVISM IN OBJECTIVE RELATIVISM.	58
1. Two Meanings of "Relativism"	59
2. The Metaphysics of Objective Relativism	78
3. Perception, Context and Objective Relativism.	106
4. Philosophical Relativism and Relativity Theory.	116
III. PERSPECTIVAL STATEMENTS OF OBJECTIVE RELATIVISM	128
1. Perspectives and Appearances	129
2. Theories of Perspective	133
3. Perspectives and Perception	146
4. E. B. McGilvary's Perspective Realism	152
APPENDIX: A MC GILVARY BIBLIOGRAPHY	170
GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY.	173

PREFACE

In 1927 Professor A. E. Murphy gave the name "Objective Relativism" to certain traits of the philosophies of John Dewey and Alfred North Whitehead. Since that time the name has freely circulated in philosophical literature. But a certain amount of confusion and ambiguity has surrounded the many varied uses the name has received. For that reason, a dissertation dealing with Objective Relativism must first of all determine precisely what traits Professor Murphy was pointing to in these philosophies. As will be demonstrated, this task is fraught with difficulty, centering mostly around Professor Murphy's use of the term "relativism." Because Murphy is not always clear about its meaning, there are different views of the meaning of "Objective Relativism." Furthermore, it soon becomes apparent that the meaning of "Objective Relativism" which I consider the only plausible one that can be taken from Murphy does not always coincide with the meanings of many writers on the subject. This discrepancy will be demonstrated throughout my dissertation. To some extent then I must justify the meaning I associate with Objective Relativism.

But my dissertation goes beyond the problem of determining Murphy's meaning of "Objective Relativism." Once it is seen what it was in the Dewey and Whitehead philosophies Murphy was pointing to, I seek to interpret those traits themselves, placing them in the context not only of the philosophies of which they are a part, but in the larger and more significant context of the philosophies from which they have developed.

It is my thesis that "Objective Relativism" identifies the answer cer-

tain American philosophies gave to the problem of the integration of "subject" and "object" (or nature and mind, experience and nature, reason and nature, existence and inquiry, etc.). This is the meaning of "Objective Relativism" in the wider context of the history of philosophy itself. In a narrower context "Objective Relativism" indicates the unique manner in which the "subject-object" integration was attempted. The problem of the "subject-object" integration I take to be the problem that must be dealt with by any philosophy worthy of the name. The answers given to this problem make up the historical philosophies. In a wider perspective the problem becomes one of integrating the various answers. Thus while objective relativism can be identified with experimental pragmatism and naturalism, it is clearly a development out of realism, and its debt to idealism is great. In its more developed form objective relativism represents an integration or synthesis of realism and idealism by means of experimentalism. It is implicit in my thesis then that the synthesis of its philosophical heritage is the true mark of a philosophy.

If objective relativism reconciles and synthesizes the various historical or traditional philosophies, it could be said to be a very ancient philosophy. To this extent it is not properly a new philosophy. On the other hand, it does represent a clear-cut development in American philosophy. Thus Chapter I will trace the history of objective relativism showing how it mediated between the answers Neo-realism and Critical Realism gave to the problem of integrating "subject" and "object." While these two American realisms answered the problem at the expense of one or the other opposite, objective relativism sought to save both opposites by reconciling or synthesizing them, thereby producing a more adequate integration. Instrumental in its success was its critique of the abstractions upon which the realist

answers were based: the realist concept of knowledge and the object of knowledge, the traditional substantial distinction of subjective and objective, and the notion of perception as a case of knowledge. There was also a revision of theories of knowledge and experience resulting from the rise of evolutionary biology, plus the influence of a new individualism.

Chapter II will deal with Professor A. E. Murphy's baptismal paper. Here I will present two themes: the confusion in the literature over the meaning of "relativism" in general, and the meaning of the relativism of objective relativism, in particular; and the associated theme of the connection (or lack of connection) between philosophical relativism and Relativity Theory. I will show that there are at least two meanings of "relativism" used ambiguously by various writers including Murphy, one meaning being more crucial to the relativism in objective relativism than the other. Both meanings, however, imply one another. In addition, I will also show how the relativism in objective relativism is allied with experimentalism. As for the relation between philosophical and physical (or scientific) relativism, my conclusion will be that, though they may influence one another, they are by no means the same. The difference rests on the fundamental difference in the respective enterprises.

Chapter III will deal with "perspectives." It will present a statement of objective relativism in the terminology of perspectives. Comparisons with the functional statement in the second chapter will be made, especially on their respective interpretations of memory and knowledge of the past. Here I will be most concerned with the late Professor E. B. McGilvary's statement of "Perspective Realism" as it is embodied in the manuscript of his posthumous book, Toward A Perspective Realism, especially in its bearing on the notion of "perspectivity." Here we will see a possibility that the

statements of objective relativism by the perspectivist and the functionalist both tend to seek an integration with their opposite number. This will demonstrate the broader tendency of objective relativism to integrate its philosophical inheritance.

A note on what I have referred to as the integration of "subject" and "object": This is not to be taken as the problem of knowledge. I take the word "integration" (or synthesis) to denote a unification or reconciliation of what had been previously considered to be irreconcilable. A Hegelian anti-dualism is thus suggested at the outset. As for the particular terms involved, I take each of them in as innocent a fashion as I possibly can. Although I have mentioned several alternative terms, I will hereafter refer to the "subject-object" problem, with the understanding that I do not thereby confine myself either to these particular terms, nor to any particular philosophy that may be behind them. In addition, my consistent use of quotation marks with them will indicate the deliberate vagueness I wish to associate with the terms. So far is this not an attempt to establish a radical dualism of "subject" and "object," or mind and body, that it could be identified--just as objective relativism has been identified--as a critique of such a dualism. Yet it is a critique that refuses to take as an alternative to dualism a monism that reduces one of the terms or elements to the other. In integrating them instead of dualizing them objective relativism refuses to obliterate the distinction between them. While insisting there is a difference between them, objective relativism insists it does not amount to a dualism. Yet is a difference, and the determination of that precise difference might well be the principal problem for objective relativism.

Because of the obvious lack of a definitive statement of objective relativism I have thought it advisable to devote this dissertation to filling

that need. I add this so that it will be understood why certain figures are included in the scope of my dissertation, and why only certain portions of their philosophies. It may be argued that basing my statement on what is to be found in the Murphy paper does not necessarily guarantee that such a statement will be definitive. But any other basis certainly would be little more than individual preference. And it would do what I have tried to avoid doing; it would take Professor Murphy's name away from him and thereby be guilty of expropriating a term for its own purposes. While I do not claim a monopoly on meanings, I do hold that it can be amply demonstrated that such a use of the name "Objective Relativism" is precisely what has been going on almost from the beginning, with its concomitant confusion and ambiguity.

Although I do not claim to include an exhaustive survey of all the literature of objective relativism, it is my aim to include (within the purview, if not the textual confines) all that is relevant to the task of enunciating a definitive statement of objective relativism, and establishing my thesis of its meaning in philosophy.

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CHAPTER I

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF OBJECTIVE RELATIVISM

The advance of science posed a problem to both groups of realists in America after the turn of the century. It was the problem of reconciling scientific conclusions about the world with what is encountered in our common experience and knowledge of that world. If one side to that problem is the analysis and interpretation of the conclusions of science to bring them into understandable relation with every-day experience, the other side is to analyze and interpret every-day experience and knowledge, especially in the light of one's theory of nature as the setting for experience and the object of knowledge. The two groups of realists took up various parts of this problem. Which parts they did take up were often determined by the answers given to the problems of their predecessors.

Thus the neo-realist was primarily concerned with showing the subjective idealist how it was possible for the world or nature to be in consciousness without thereby losing its independence of that consciousness. The critical realist, on the other hand, was concerned with showing the neo-realist how it was impossible for the world to be in consciousness at all--at least how it was impossible for a physically existing world. The objective relativist said, in effect, both answers are right given their presuppositions. But some of these presuppositions were rejected in favor of a metaphysics that ultimately afforded the basis for an integration of the two realist answers.

In his zeal to avoid subjective idealism, the neo-realist tended to an extreme of objectivism. The critical realist, profoundly influenced by the assumption that for the world to be in consciousness there would have to be a physical world inside of something ultimately not physical, tended to an extreme of subjectivism. Both views maintained the assumption that subjectivity was substantially different from objectivity, although this was not so extremely dualized by all. Both views were committed to a realism: it was the world that was known, and not any effects or representations of it in the organism. But both viewed that world largely in the non-evolutionary, static terms of traditional realism. Furthermore, with some important exceptions to be noted, both clung to traditional notions of the organism and its place and function in that world.

Thus both groups of realists, because of these views, tended to deal with knowledge, perception and experience in the accents of "epistemology"--especially the more extreme critical realists. While the notion of knowledge as a reproduction or picturing was being challenged, there was still the notion that knowledge had to be referred back to the world as it existed before and exists now. Both realists approached the problem of reconciling scientific and common-sense knowledge in these terms.

All of these problems come to a head in the attempts of both monistic (neo-) and dualistic (critical) realists to integrate "subject" and "object," subjectivity (or relativity) and objectivity. Professor Arthur E. Murphy identified the union of objectivity and relativity as the "most original and most controversial" element in the "genuinely new philosophy" of Dewey and Whitehead; i.e., objective relativism:

It attempts to unite two propositions which have uniformly been taken to be incompatible. (a) The objective facts of the world of nature

and of reality are the very 'apparent' and relative happenings directly disclosed to us in perception. (b) In spite (or because) of such objectivity such happenings remain ultimately and inescapably relative. Such relativity is hence an ultimate fact about the objective world.¹

Murphy pointed out that the struggle between the monistic and dualistic realists was the best example of how these two propositions had been held to be incompatible. He also showed that Dewey's objective relativism--his "realism without monism or dualism"--undercut the struggle by bringing the alleged incompatibility into question. Dewey was not only thereby not playing the game with these realists, he was suggesting that the game might not be worth playing. For it rested on the "false and destructive presupposition" of the ultimate incompatibility of objectivity and "ultimate relativity."

In this chapter I will set forth first the monistic position of the neo-realists; followed by the dualistic position of the critical realists; concluding with the third position of experimental pragmatism and objective relativism.

1. NEO-REALISM

By the time Dewey offered his "tertium quid"--what he called "pluralistic realism"--a monistic and a dualistic realism had been formulated by the two major groups of American realists in the first quarter of this century. The neo-realists had offered "epistemological monism," which meant

. . . that when perceived, things are directly and identically present in consciousness; in virtue of being perceived, they constitute what is called content. And realism adds the further assertion that, in certain notable cases, at least, things are none the less independent for being so perceived. Thus the case of realism rests on showing that to be content of a mind, is not to be dependent on a mind.²

1. A. E. Murphy, "Objective Relativism In Dewey And Whitehead," Philosophical Review, 1927, XXXVI, p.122.

2. R. B. Perry, "A Realistic Theory Of Independence" in E. B. Holt et al, The New Realism (New York, 1912), p.143.

4

Epistemological monism sought to establish the principle of "immanence" ("things are directly and identically present in consciousness"), and of "independence" ("things are none the less independent for being so perceived").³ The principle of immanence represented the profound influence on neo-realism by William James, especially the influence of his famous paper, "Does Consciousness Exist?" For it was James' theory of consciousness that enabled the neo-realist to have his naive or direct realism (the world present in consciousness) without a resulting subjective idealism (the world therefore dependent on consciousness). As Perry pointed out, on James' theory of consciousness

Existence would . . . coincide with the content of experience, but would be independent of any act of experiencing on the part of mind. This . . . would be most consistent with James' theory that mind is a peculiar type of relationship among terms which in themselves are neither physical nor mental.

This is the view, sometimes referred to as 'neutralism,' which has been explicitly developed by those later realists who have taken James' 'Does Consciousness Exist?' as their point of departure.⁴

That is, the neo-realist's monism was neutral.

The principle of independence represented the critique neo-realism was bringing against idealism and was the true principle of realism for it. To be content of a mind, it insisted, was not to be dependent on a mind. This was offered as an alternative to the either-or of idealism: either reality is unknowable, or it is the ideal of knowledge itself and thus the very quintessence of thought. The neo-realist alternative made it possible

3. R. B. Perry, Present Philosophical Tendencies (New York, 1925), p.313.

4. R. B. Perry, The Thought And Character Of William James (Boston, 1935), II, p.592 and note.

to regard reality as sustaining, or as being capable of sustaining, the relation which constitutes knowledge, while at the same time sustaining that relation only accidentally⁵

But the neo-realist soon found himself with the problem of too much independence. If the known world is wholly independent of mind, how could the neo-realist account for error and illusion of that world? And how could he account for it without resort to subjectivism? Having shown that the world when known was in consciousness but still independent of that consciousness, the neo-realist now found it exceedingly difficult to show how it was possible for consciousness ever to be in error about that world. This was the objectivism in neo-realism. Questions of error and illusion, on the other hand, were questions of subjectivity or relativity. The question of the relativistic but existential status of the objects of illusion and error, together with the question surrounding the nature of consciousness, were identified by W. P. Montague as "the most influential questions of difference" among the neo-realists.⁶

In the cooperative volume by the six neo-realists neo-realism is said to be

primarily a doctrine concerning the relation between the knowing process and the thing known . . . [It] seeks to deal with the same problem that has given rise to 'naive realism,' 'dualism,' and 'subjectivism'. . . .⁷

It is, in short, an attempted answer to the philosophical problem of the "subject-object" integration. Prior to neo-realism, naive realism had faltered over the problem of error. Both the naive and the new realism maintained theories of direct perception (or immanence); i.e., no intervening thing between the knower and the known world. However, as Montague pointed out, naive realism disregarded the "personal equation" and the elaborate mechanism underlying sense perception. Thus it could not account for error and illusion.

5. Perry, The New Realism, p.117.

6. W. P. Montague, The Ways Of Things (New York, 1940), p.245.

7. E. B. Holt et al, The New Realism, p.2.

But neo-realism was supposed to amend this.⁸ The problem of error then was the problem of the "personal equation," or relativism; what was called

. . . the apparently hopeless disagreement of the world as presented in immediate experience with the true or corrected system of objects in whose reality we believe. So the first and most urgent problem for the new realist is to amend the realism of common sense in such wise as to make it compatible with the facts of relativity.⁹

James disproved that a substantival entity called "consciousness" exists, and established the "subject-object" distinction as one made within the larger context of experience, which in turn was identified with nature. Consciousness was a function, or a relation; the problem is to define that function or relation. But the neo-realists were not out of the woods of modern philosophy yet. James clearly showed how the subjective-objective distinction is a functional, not metaphysical, distinction of what is originally pure or neutral phenomena. But the neo-realists generally continued to speak in the terms of the traditional metaphysical distinction of "subject" and "object," a distinction that led them to continue to view subjectivity or relativity as a contamination of objectivity. The "subject-object" problem for them was no longer one of getting the "object" into consciousness, since the assumption in their objectivism was that the known world is immediately and directly present in consciousness. But the problem was shifted to perception. The world was "out there" and our perceptions of it were "in here." As in the case of consciousness, perception was identified as a case of knowledge, and what was perceived had to be squared with the world of common sense. But his objectivism left the neo-realist with too much proved. He not only had to show in non-subjectivistic terms what error

8. W. P. Montague, "The New Realism And The Old," Journal Of Philosophy, 1912, IX, p.46.

9. Holt et al, The New Realism, p.10.

7
and illusion were, he also had to show how error and illusion were possible to begin with. As Murphy pointed out, the monist insists that the "immediately experienced data" are objective, and

hence must introduce 'external' relations and try to show that they are not ultimately and intrinsically relative.¹⁰

That is, the reality which is directly present in perception still is not ultimately and intrinsically dependent upon perceiving, consciousness, or mind. To admit such dependence meant for these neo-realists an acceptance of the kind of relativism they were criticizing in idealism. Yet they sought to do justice to the "facts of relativity." But that is the problem: If what we know is the world as it existed prior to knowing, and it is directly present in perception or knowing, how can any form of relativism or dependence be granted without thereby being involved in some notion of making or changing that prior world or existence?

The neo-realist theory of external relations was a successful polemic against the dominance of the internal or constitutive theory. Spaulding pointed out that external relations mean that "relatedness and independence are quite compatible."¹¹ This is strictly an external relatedness that allowed the "object" to be in relation to the "subject" (or the known world to be in perception or consciousness), but without any subjectivity or relativity. As Hollands pointed out, what the theory comes to is the possibility of an entity entering into more than one relational context unchanged.¹² The desire for an exclusively external type of relation was a part of the extreme objectivism of neo-realism.

10. Murphy, "Relativism," p.123.

11. E. G. Spaulding, The New Rationalism (New York, 1918), p.177.

12. Edmund H. Hollands, "The Externality Of Relations," Journal Of Philosophy, 1914, XI, p.463.

James displayed the typical realist assumption of a static reality as what our knowledge refers back to, and the conclusions that were unavoidable when the "facts of relativity" were brought together with it:

We plunge forward into the field of fresh experience with the beliefs our ancestors and we have made already; these determine what we notice; what we notice determines what we do; what we do again determines what we experience . . .¹³

Thus we may glimpse reality, but never grasp it:

What we grasp is always some substitute for it which previous human thinking has peptonized and cooked for our consumption . . . wherever we find it, it has been already faked.¹⁴

It is no wonder that with all his acceptance of relativity, context, and humanism (what he termed his individualism), James was ultimately led to give up the "intellectualist" logic as a fundamental distortion of reality.

Reality, life, experience, he said, exceeds our logic, "overflows and surrounds it."¹⁵ As with all the neo-realists, it was exceedingly difficult for James to reconcile his presupposed reality with what finally eventuated in knowing it.

And yet, at other times, James was quite obviously not under the influence of this neo-realist presupposition:

All ways of conceiving a concrete fact, if they are true ways at all, are equally true ways. There is no property ABSOLUTELY essential to any one thing. The same property which figures as the essence of a thing on one occasion becomes a very inessential feature upon another. . .¹⁶

In other words, if one is not committed to a notion of what the precise

13. William James, Pragmatism (New York, 1907), pp.254-55.

14. Ibid, pp.248-49.

15. William James, Essays In Radical Empiricism. A Pluralistic Universe (New York, 1943), II, p.214.

16. William James, Psychology (New York, 1890), II, p.333.

character of reality or the world is at the beginning of the knowing process, there is no problem of reconciling the world with what is known about it at the end of the process. Here James could look upon all cases of knowledge as being equally real, without thinking of them as distortions or fakes.

But there is in James a wavering between a realism that looked back to a fixed world as the object of knowledge, and a pragmatism that was futuristic and sought to establish the significant contribution of the relative or personal factors in knowledge of that world: "the well-known democratic respect for the sacredness of individuality."¹⁷ There was also a wavering between a realistic view of knowledge as a reproduction of its object, and a Bergsonian view of an intuitive, immediate grasp or "having" of the object. James at one point said:

Truth we conceive to mean everywhere, not duplication, but addition; not the constructing of inner copies of already complete realities, but rather the collaborating with realities so as to bring about a clearer result.¹⁸

Traditionally, the subjective was said to be antithetical to the objective. For the neo-realists, who thought of it in terms of (constitutive) dependence, subjectivity was antithetical to independence. As it finally turned out, however, a form of relativity or subjectivity other than mere external relatedness was admitted by certain neo-realists under the name of "selectivity." But the assumption remained of the object of knowledge (the world or reality itself) as totally independent of such relativity. Thus the position was called "selective realism."

It was therefore meant to be a highly restricted relativity:

... the alteration of the perceived body by the physiological mechanism of perception could in any case prove only that a body otherwise indepen-

17. Perry, James, II, p.266.

18. William James, The Meaning Of Truth (New York, 1914), p.60.

dent of consciousness is in a certain limited respect dependent thereon . . . It would be only a special case of a very common kind of dependence, arising from the fact that the organism belongs to the field of interacting bodies.¹⁹

Being subjective or relative means for selective realism being dependent on consciousness, but it is a dependence of being selected. Thus: "The presence of some elements alone in one complex is dependent on the selective action of consciousness . . ."²⁰ In addition, there is a dependence on the combining action of consciousness.²¹ Knowledge is therefore said to be a way of taking, not making, its objects.²² Selective realism for the neo-realist was not traditional subjectivism, and to that extent the traditional view of objectivity and subjectivity had been revised. The assumption that this sort of dependence was traditional subjectivism was for Montague the root of the traditional subjectivistic position.²³ Yet at times Montague could make it sound like a very serious sort of subjectivism. Everything I can conceive, he says at one point, is an "extension or reconstruction of what I perceive." And everything I perceive is in some sense "relative to and determined by my own inner states and processes."

Hence with the solipsist I can and must exclaim 'The world is my world' . . . But . . . this relativity of all objects to a subject is selective rather than constitutive, and does not make the objects dependent on the self that knows them.²⁴

In the final analysis, Arthur O. Lovejoy was correct.²⁵ To avoid the contamination of constitutive subjectivity or relativity, the neo-realist was

19. Perry, The New Realism, pp.135-36. Note how his naturalism requires taking account of at least some relativism.

20. Ibid, p.138 romanized.

21. Ibid, p.140.

22. R. B. Perry, Philosophy Of The Recent Past (New York, 1926), pp.199-200.

23. W. P. Montague, The Ways Of Knowing (London & New York, 1925), p.290; 238.

24. Ibid, pp.302-3.

25. A. O. Lovejoy, "Reflections Of A Temporalist On The New Realism," Journal Of Philosophy, 1911, VIII, p.597.

driven further and further into objectivism, until all such relativity was denied, the "subject" tended to disappear, and we have a "pan-objectivism."

For the neo-realists it was the pragmatist who was most guilty of the relativistic sin. They claimed that he had illicitly extended the relativism of his moral theory to his logic. Montague's statement is typical, and note how he (like Perry) accepted a relativistic moral theory:

When the same proposition seems true to one man and false to another, one of the men must be wrong; but when one and the same thing is felt as a good to one man and as an evil to another, both of the men can be right.²⁶

There is some question whether you can maintain such a relativistic moral theory and avoid a conflict with a non-relativistic logic. Pratt, e.g., wondered if a relativistic morals would be consistent with the neo-realist pan-objectivism.²⁷ Values and likings are made relative (in the sense of personal and private) affairs. But if this is true, belief is similarly relative. And if belief is, then knowledge is too, for knowledge certainly is intimately related to belief. But that is the point both groups of realists refused to acknowledge. The trouble goes back to the neo-realist persistence in the view that such subjective or relative factors are substantially or metaphysically different from the objective factors. As Dewey said, belief is viewed as existentially subjective, personal and private, and thus a matter of "arbitrary undiscussable preference."²⁸ Neo-realists maintained a relativistic morality, but balked at relativistic logic or knowledge. Still their intention was to account for "the facts of relativity." But in doing that

26. Montague, Things, p.245.

27. James Bissett Pratt, "A Defense Of Dualistic Realism," Journal Of Philosophy, 1917, XIV, p.258.

28. John Dewey, Experience And Nature (Chicago, 1926), pp.424-25.

they almost always thought of such relativity as the subjectivism of subjective idealism.

Looking back on neo-realism, Montague identified the objectivist tendency in the movement with objective relativism. It was the view that

Every object that appears to be in space is in space . . . an object at each instant has no single position and shape by its own right, but many positions and shapes, each one of which is relative to some observer.²⁹

For Montague, objective relativism plus behaviorism constituted "the essence of American neo-realism, at least in its later stage of development."³⁰ This is what it meant for him:

In its eagerness to bridge the gap between the mind and its physical world, neo-realism has by its theory of Objective Relativism degraded the pure members of that world to an unseemly parity with the objects of error and fantasy, while at the same time, by its theory of Behaviorism, it has degraded the mind itself to a mass of 'specific responses.'³¹

Serious doubt, however, can be raised about whether neo-realism did in fact amount to an objective relativism. It is difficult to find any of the original neo-realists who entertained the kind of objective relativism Montague here attributes to them. Though they did hold to objectivism in varying degrees, none ever really came to grips with this matter of a thing's properties being relative to an observer; i.e., with the problem of relativism. There could be an exception to this depending upon what precisely Montague was referring to when he spoke of "at least in its later stage of development." If this is late enough it is bound to include an objective relativism, for we will see that objective relativism could be said to be a development from neo-realism more than from critical realism.

29. Montague, Things, p.247.

30. Ibid, p.252.

31. Ibid, p.259.

2. CRITICAL REALISM

Critical realism offered a second answer to the problem of the "subject-object" integration. A simple way of distinguishing it from neo-realism would be to say that critical realism posited "essences" or "data" between the "subject" and "object," where neo-realism, in its theory of immanence, put nothing between them. Like the neo-realists, the critical realists disagreed among themselves, dividing on the question of essences. Some (the so-called "non-essence wing") claimed an essence to be a part or characteristic of the mental state, and hence it could be said to exist. Others (the "essence wing") gave essences a non-existential, purely logical status. But for both, existence itself was not a part of what was given to the knower.

Roy Wood Sellars once described critical realism this way:

It is realism because it maintains that the human mind can build up knowledge about extramental realities; and it is critical realism because it holds that these realities cannot be presented to an immediate awareness, as naive realism inclines to assert.³²

Lovejoy denied that the content of experience consisted in whole or in part of anything that upon any plausible theory could be said to be a member of the physical world. Rather, it consists of particulars which arise through

the functioning of percipient organisms, are present only within the private fields of awareness of such organisms, are destitute of certain of the essential properties and relations implied either by the historic concept of the 'physical' or by the contemporary physicist's concept of it, and possess properties which physical things lack.³³

They are "essentially of the nature" of Lockean and Cartesian "ideas," and through them all our knowledge of the physical world and of "any other

32. Roy Wood Sellars, Evolutionary Naturalism (Chicago, 1922), p.20.

33. A. O. Lovejoy, The Revolt Against Dualism; An Inquiry Concerning The Existence Of Ideas (Chicago, 1930), p.264.

11

realities extraneous to our several private fields of awareness, must be mediated."

To believe in a "real physical world" (i.e., to be a realist), means that you have to hold two dualistic beliefs:

(a) That there are given in experience particular existents which are not parts of that world, and you must hold (b) that whatever knowledge of real objects you have is indirect or representative, that the datum whereby you know any such object is not identical with the object known.³⁴

When the "non-givenness" of existence was coupled with their respective theories of essence, the difficulties of the critical realists became apparent. For George Santayana, who called the datum "pure image" and labelled any notion of existence as the workings of "animal faith," existence "is a fact always open to doubt."³⁵ For the other "wing," the outcome was less sceptical but still problematic enough so that ultimately there was also an appeal to "faith," "belief," or "instinct." The development in science which was leading to an agnosticism and phenomenalism among certain physicists: the ever-increasing disparity between "scientific objects" and "perceptual objects," was added evidence for dualism, in Lovejoy's view. His view was that they were not only disparate, but substantially different. The progress of science thus was widening the gulf between our ideas and the world, or between "scientific" and "perceptual" objects, and making it more difficult to bridge. It did not call for "animal faith," he thought: "It is faith, indeed, but . . . it is a highly critical and extremely attenuated faith."³⁶

34. Ibid, p.246.

35. George Santayana, Scepticism And Animal Faith; Introduction To A System Of Philosophy (New York, 1923), pp.34; 39-40.

36. Lovejoy, Dualism, p.267.

Regardless of their respective concepts of essence, the critical realists were soon brought face to face with an opposite problem from that of the neo-realists: error was now accounted for (either by attributing essences wrongly, or by their inadequacies), but the possibility of knowledge was now put in doubt. Where the neo-realist had found it difficult, if not impossible, to be wrong, the critical realist found it difficult, if not impossible, to be right. Generally speaking, in terms of objective relativism, the neo-realist had the problem of relativism and the critical realist had the problem of objectivity. The neo-realist pan-objectivism brought forth a critical-realist revolution toward traditional subjectivism. As Dewey said, the resort to objectivism, which ignores "initiating and reorganizing desire and imagination," in the end only strengthens "that other phase of subjectivism which consists in escape to the enjoyment of inward landscape."³⁷

The critical realist shared with the neo-realist the presupposition of a reality that remained fixed throughout the knowledge process and was the object of that knowledge. However, this reality was not the same object of knowledge that it was for the neo-realist. The new view was that the objects of knowledge were known by means of essences. Coupling that with the presupposition they shared with the neo-realists, the critical realists set forth a powerful argument against neo-realism by pointing out the obvious disparity between the supposed object of knowledge and our actual knowledge of it. This was their most common anti-neo-realist critique. With it they were quick to point to one of the major neo-realist problems: knowledge of the past.

Our capacity to make an object out of what no longer exists is the best proof of the validity of critical realism. It shows that both the content and the objectness are parts of the act of knowledge.³⁸

37. Dewey, Nature, p.241.

38. Roy Wood Sellars, "Knowledge And Its Categories," in Durant Drake et al, Essays In Critical Realism; A Co-operative Study Of The Problem Of Knowledge (London, 1920), p.215.

15

We should note, in response to Durant Drake's plea, that there is a distinction to bear in mind when speaking of the dualism of critical realism. It was always the intention of these realists, if not their achievement, to avoid the traditional dualism that meant subjectivism; i.e., the proposition that we know only the contents of our mind. In all their dealings with ideas or essences they insisted that we know the world or the object by means of these ideas or essences. In short, the critical realist agreed with the neo-realist that a fixed world or reality was known in all knowledge. However, they differed in their views of whether or not such an object of knowledge was directly known; i.e., directly present in experience, knowing, perception or consciousness. When the critical realists thought of the world's being present in knowledge or perception, they thought of it as the physical world "out there" being in the non-physical knower "in here." Thus they rejected the "immediatism" of neo-realism and set forth the notion that it was essences or data that were present to the knower. They insisted on realism, however, and so insisted that it was still the world that was known. In this sense, an essence could never be interpreted as the object of knowledge. As Drake pointed out:

What we perceive, conceive, remember, think of, is the outer object itself . . . which is independent of the knowledge-process, and beyond which there is nothing else.³⁹

What is given to the knower is not an existent representing the object, but (in so far as our knowledge is accurate) it is simply the essence or character, the "what" of the object known.

A comparison made by James B. Pratt demonstrates how the new concept of essence differentiated the two realisms from each other and from Lockean

39. ^oDurant Drake, "The Approach To Critical Realism" in Essays in Critical Realism, p.4.

Realism. In thinking about a dead friend, for example, the Lockean view would say that we are thinking about our "idea" of that friend, and the neo-realist would say our present concept somehow is the friend. Critical realism would deny both propositions, holding that

the object of one's thought is exactly the friend himself. But how can one think of one's friend? How, indeed, can one think at all? Surely only by means of concepts. The concept is thus not the object of one's thought but the means of one's thinking, and to have a concept of one's friend is to think of him . . .⁴⁰

However, the critical-realist notion of essence had its own problems which ultimately proved to be insurmountable. A suggestion of their magnitude is contained in an analysis of the notion that showed there was a double transcendence of the object in it. The object is ontologically transcendent in being ontologically ulterior to any of the essences (themselves transcendent beings) that belief may project upon them. And the object is epistemologically transcendent in the sense of being independent of our efforts to grasp it.⁴¹

The critical realist thus had also achieved an independence of the world or "object" from the "subject." But it was a more radical independence than that of the neo-realist who at least had agreed that the world or "object" was directly present in knowledge. Essences alone were directly present in the critical-realist view. It is not quite fair to call this a representationism, however. The critical realist always believed he was steering between the extremes of monism and dualism, hence the dualism of critical realism is not quite a traditional dualism.⁴² But the matter was

40. J. B. Pratt, "Critical Realism And The Possibility Of Knowledge," in Drake et al, Essays In Critical Realism, p.97.

41. J. Lowenberg in "A Symposium On Critical Realism," Proceedings Of The Aristotelian Society (London, 1924), p.101 Supplementary Volume IV.

42. Drake, Essays, p.4.

never clearly established. Drake at one point said that the critical realist viewed "perceived-objects" as effects of the "real-objects" beyond them, such that they were representations. They were not representations in the sense of copies, but in the sense of a Congressman representing his constituents.⁴³ But as soon as the critical realist attempted to separate essence from its object without the use of representation, the question was always raised as to the basis upon which the essence could be said to belong to the object to begin with. Or, continuing Drake's metaphor, if essences represent like Congressmen do, who or what "elects" them?

It should be noted also that Lovejoy always insisted that this was a presentative realism. But what was presented for the neo-realist (the world or actually existing object) was neither presented nor represented for the critical realist. Yet it was known; by means, however, of data or essences.

With the world thus put beyond the reach of any influence of the knowing process, since the process had to do directly with essences only, the critical realist could be more liberal with the problem of relativism than the neo-realist had been. The latter had the world or object present directly in knowledge and so he had to restrict his relativism to one of selecting or taking only. But the critical realist had set forth essences between the "subject" and the "object," and if he thereby found it difficult to bridge the gap, at least he could more easily work with relativism and the problem of error.

George Santayana, the most sceptical of them all, could account for relativism without thereby having to draw agnostic conclusions:

... the absolute truth is undiscoverable just because it is not a perspective. Perspectives are essential to animal apprehension; an

43. Durant Drake, "Where Do Perceived Objects Exist?" Mind, 1915, XXIV, p.31.

observer, himself a part of the world he observes, must have a particular station in it; he cannot be equally near to everything, nor internal to anything but himself; of the rest he can only take views, abstracted according to his sensibility and fore-shortened according to his interests . . . Mind was not created for the sake of discovering the absolute truth. The absolute truth has its own intangible reality, and scorns to be known. The function of mind is rather to increase the wealth of the universe in the spiritual dimension, by adding appearance to substance and passion to necessity, and by creating all those private perspectives, and those emotions of wonder, adventure, curiosity, and laughter which omniscience would exclude.⁴⁴

In many ways this is an admirable statement of objective relativism.

Santayana made a major contribution to it not only when he suggested that the object of knowledge is not what it had traditionally been taken to be, but also in his suggestion of a new concept of the nature of knowledge:

Knowledge is not eating, and we cannot expect to devour and possess what we mean. Knowledge is recognition of something absent; it is a salutation, not an embrace. It is an advance on sensation precisely because it is representative.⁴⁵

While this is an advance over the traditional notion of knowledge and perception involving images, reproductions or pictures of what is known and perceived, it is to be noted that Santayana (and all the early realists) clung to the idea that knowledge and perception reports something to the knower, tells him in some fashion what is there. The customary comparison between perceiving and photographing was criticized by the late Professor E. B. McGilvary, demonstrating how objective relativism was closer to the neo-realist position. While there are comparisons between perception and photographing, McGilvary cannot agree that a camera does actually see:

It takes pictures of what is seen and of what we cannot see because of the limitations of the mechanism of vision, and it also has the advan-

44. George Santayana, The Realm Of Essence; Book First Of Realms Of Being (New York, 1927), p.xiii.

45. George Santayana, The Life Of Reason (New York, 1936), I, p.77.

tage of the durability of the reports that it makes. A photograph is an image, that is a likeness, of the object photographed. According to the philosophy submitted in these [Carus] lectures what is visually sensed is not an image. It is the object itself . . . what is visually sensed is not a picture of what a camera, placed where the eye is, would photograph. It is the object itself . . .⁴⁶

But there are two more aspects of Santayana's thought which are important to us. His critical realism, in separating "subject" and "object" by essences, made it easier for him to cope with the problem of relativism, and he was thus able to propose that objectivity and subjectivity or relativity might not be as incompatible as once thought. There is his suggestion of objectivity involving a form of dependence or relativity:

When a thing becomes my object it becomes dependent on me ideally, for being known, and I am probably, directly or indirectly, dependent on it materially, for having been led to know it. What is independent of knowledge is substance, in that it has a place, movement, origin, and destiny of its own, no matter what I may think or fail to think about it.⁴⁷

This concept of a relativized objectivity follows from his concept that the objects of knowledge

refer to whatever is placed before the mind, as a target to be aimed at by attention. Objective would then mean present to imagination; and things would become objects of thought in the same incidental way in which they become objects of desire.⁴⁸

It is "the utter confusion of modern philosophy" that has given rise to the popular notion of the objective as

46. E. B. McGilvary, Toward A Perspective Realism, I, pp.9-10. This book is now in the process of being published by The Open Court Publishing Co. All citations from this work refer to a copy of the manuscript supplied this writer by Professor A. G. Ramsperger who prepared the manuscript for publication. The page numbering in the manuscript is not consecutive throughout, hence I will always insert the particular chapter with each page citation.

47. Santayana, Faith, pp.202-3.

48. Ibid, p.203.

that which is independent of intent or attention fixed upon it; which is precisely what the objective can never be.⁴⁹

In this fashion, Santayana at least suggests the possibility of uniting objectivity and relativity, although it is at the expense of the difficult notion of essence. One more point also follows from what I have already quoted from Santayana: everyone has at least a part of the truth.

All experience yields some acquaintance with the realm of essence, and some perspective of the material world; and this would always be a true perspective (since things seen at that angle and with that organ really look like that) if the appearance were not stretched to cover more than it covers in reality. Of such true perspectives the simplest and most violently foreshortened may be as good as the most complicated, the most poetical or pictorial as good as the most scientific, not only aesthetically but even cognitively; because it may report the things concerned on that human scale on which we need to measure them, and in this relation may report them correctly.⁵⁰

And note how this is not just a physical perspectivity.

There are several traits of objective relativism in Santayana and critical realism generally: (1) the fact that the knower is a part of the world he knows means knowledge will be perspectival in character, and further suggests the inescapable involvement of "subject" and "object" in the knowledge process; (2) a new concept of the object of knowledge; (3) the nature of knowledge is something other than what it is in its traditional interpretation; (4) the suggestion of new concepts of objectivity and subjectivity; and (5) a certain validity is to be granted to all perspectives.

Another critical realist, this time in the opposite wing, grappled with the problem of relativism. For Roy Wood Sellars, critical realism was a "more careful analysis of the act of knowledge" in which its adherents

49. Santayana, Essence, p.129.

50. Ibid, p.xiv.

attempt to "appreciate subjectivism and yet be realists."⁵¹ Sellars dealt with relativism under the name of the "Advance Of The Personal." The "Advance" was the increasing presence in science of the role or contribution of the knower, "subject," mind, or what he called "the personal." From naive to natural realism, through "scientific realism" to critical realism, there is an increasing amount of "the personal" in the conclusions of science (what I would identify in another context as the relative). Sellars believes this is in accordance with a development of science away from perceptual observation with its perspective to the more conceptual observation of scientific realism, which is a "purified natural realism."⁵² At this stage the scientist's subject-matter is at once "semi-perceptual and semi-conceptual." The mistake of the scientist is to continue using "perception" as synonymous with "knowledge."

This increasing deviation from natural or naive realism means for Sellars a concomitant increase of mind or mental control in the scientific process, with perception reduced now to mere means. Science has forced the human mind once and for all away from its naive, primitive outlook and has set the stage for the struggle between idealism and a critical restatement of realism.⁵³ The common, external world, once thought to be open and freely available to any knower, has become more hypothetical as the personal element gains in strength and assurance.

The Advance of the Personal means a revision of some old concepts--like the traditional distinction between an "external" world fronting the individual and his "inner" sphere; a distinction which is now reduced to

51. Sellars, Essays, p.190.

52. Roy Wood Sellars, Critical Realism; A Study Of The Nature And Conditions Of Knowledge (Chicago & New York, 1916), p.27.

53. Ibid, p.48.

a working-distinction within the individual's experience; that is, within the personal. The personal in this large sense covers both those experiences which are usually considered personal, or private, and those which are regarded as common.⁵⁴

Sellars appears to have overcome the substantival distinction and separation of objectivity and subjectivity in reducing the external-internal distinction to one made within experience itself. This is obviously quite close to the functional distinction of "subject" and "object" made by the neo-realists under James' influence. However, Sellars makes the distinction by basing it upon his initial assumption of the notion of essences. This notion, as we have already seen, is in turn based upon the assumption that knowledge reports what is there--an assumption shared with neo-realism. While the neo-realist had claimed "what is there" is immediately and directly present in knowledge, the critical realist disagreed. But the critical realist also refused to give up the notion that knowledge is a report. The only course for him to take was to add a third element to the dualism of natural realism: the datum or essence. Sellars called it

the appearance of the thing . . . which implies the thing, but that which is immediately given is the appearance and not the thing.⁵⁵

It will be noted here that Sellars uses the term "appearance" like others used "datum" or "essence." An appearance is said to be "of the thing" and "that which is immediately given." Since it is so given it cannot be the thing itself. Whether or not it is a part of the thing is a question many asked about the notion of essence from the start. Ultimately the critical realist has to admit that it is neither the thing, nor a part of it, nor a picture or representation of it. Because this is the customary use of "appearance," any theory of appearance or appearing is distinctly not

54. Ibid, p.49.

55. Ibid, p.51.

a variety of objective relativism. As Sellars pointed out, perception "can never reach the thing, but only its appearances." We arrive at the thing by means of knowledge, and that "must be other than perception."⁵⁶

Sellars' "Advance" had indicated to him that as science or knowledge becomes more conceptual there is more of the personal involved. But perception too is relative:

Every percept has unique conditions which cannot be duplicated . . . The past history of the individual, his dominant interest, the particular purpose and mental context of the time also play their part as conditions . . . We may conclude, therefore, that percepts are personal and that the external world, so far at least as it is immediately experienced, differs from individual to individual.⁵⁷

For Sellars, as for the other critical realists, the "Advance" means we must give up the naive and neo-realist notion that the object (or existence) is immediately present in knowledge; i.e., immediatism. Idealism took the "Advance" as a final stage, rather than as a passage from perception to conception. Science now admits more and more that its objects are conceptual rather than perceptual.⁵⁸

It would not be fair to the critical realists to overlook the fact that generally they were concerned to find a place in their thinking for the pragmatic emphasis on action. Although none of them appeared to deal with it in the kind of fashion that experimentalism did, at least some suggested that pragmatic action might be a basis for escaping the circle of essences.⁵⁹ There is no doubt, however, that it was Sellars who came closest to a statement of a genuine experimentalism. At one point, in establishing his concept of the nature of knowledge, he mentions the role

56. Ibid, p.52.

57. Ibid, pp.56-7.

58. Ibid, p.58.

59. Arthur Kenyon Rogers, "The Case Against Dualism," Philosophical Review, 1920, XXIX, p.30.

of experiment whereby propositions are tested in experience. But then he feels compelled to deny that what these propositions are about is ever in experience:

Scientific knowledge . . . consists of propositions which do not attempt to picture it [the physical world] . . . These propositions . . . after being tested [within experience] . . . are considered as being knowledge about that which can never be literally present within the field of experience, although it controls the elements in the field.⁶⁰

The reluctance to naturalize thinking or conceptual constructions is obvious. The reply to such a statement would be to ask, If what these propositions are about is not in the field of experience, where is it? A clear-cut dualism of experience and the physical world is implicit in this view.

The early American realists had generally parted company with the British Empiricist passive or spectator theory of knowledge. In a sense, the whole history of the realists' difficulties with relativism could be summed up as their struggle to determine how much of an "activist" theory they would adopt; how much of the legacy of idealism were they going to keep--what Pratt once termed "the irreducible minimum of truth in Kantian Idealism":

If, as the realist insists, knowledge is the revelation of an independently real world, the form of this revelation is at least in part dependent on the nature of our intelligence.⁶¹

This was the truth of idealism that also plagued the neo-realists in the form of "the facts of relativity." For experimentalism, and hence for objective relativism, it is of paramount importance because it bears directly on its concept of relativism. A suggestion of what that would be

60. Sellars, Realism, pp.vi-vii.

61. James Bissett Pratt, Personal Realism (New York, 1937), pp.93-4.

like is contained in Dewey's description of idealists as having displayed some sense of the method and objective of science in seeing that

the object of knowledge implies that the found rather than the given is the proper subject-matter of science. Recognizing the part played by intelligence in this finding, they have framed a theory of the constitutive operation of mind in the determination of real objects.⁶²

But in equating these objects with reality, truth with Being, they were forced to take this work

absolutely and wholesale, instead of relatively and in detail . . . it took re-constitution to be constitution; re-construction to be construction . . . an office of transformation was converted into an act of original and final creation . . .⁶³

The critical realist was aware of this pitfall, and he was always careful not to be caught making essences a part of the world; i.e., existent. To do so would have meant equating what was present in experience with reality. The neo-realist had done precisely that. But he too was aware of the subjective-idealist pitfall. So he had to deny any serious sort of relativism. But in refusing to identify what was present in experience with the physical world itself, the critical realist was free to introduce relativistic considerations.

Sellars reflected the neo-realist notion of selectivity when he said that the physical existent is not an object in its own right, but is "made an object by the selective action of the percipient organism," such selection being behavioral, preliminary to overt action upon the selected existent, and due to the interest of the organism. However, no added character attached to such an existent, even though Sellars distinguished

62. Dewey, Nature, pp.157-58.

63. Ibid, pp.157-58.

it as being somehow made an object. The character of "being an object" is solely "a function of the organism."⁶⁴

Sellars also displayed an inclination to revise the notion of the nature of knowledge. The "Advance" meant that our knowledge "corresponds" with its object, instead of duplicating it, or being the same as it:

To have knowledge . . . is not to grasp the very stuff of that existent. To have knowledge is not to be the thing known. Knowledge supervenes upon the thing known and is external to it. It is the sort of information which the organism can achieve under stimulation from the existent.⁶⁵

But, like the neo-realists, Sellars denied that this is any form of relativism by distinguishing (in keeping with his critical-realist notion of essences) between being "existentially given" and being "cognitively given":

The external thing selected and referred to as an object is never existentially given in experience, but is cognitively given in the sense that it is interpreted and revealed. Knowing is a selective and interpretative act which claims to manifest the object.⁶⁶

The object of knowledge is still what it was for the neo-realist (i.e., the world or reality), but now it is denied that the object is directly present. Only the essences or data are present to mind; essences or data being not absolute or inherent qualities of the physical thing, but

responses of the organism which are correlated with external things and regarded, first, naively as their qualities or aspects, and, then, critically as material for knowledge of them.⁶⁷

Sellars and the critical realists clung to the notion of a fixed, static reality--in this case, the object of knowledge "behind" essences instead of directly present, and ultimately unreachable by the knower except through

64. Sellars, Essays, p.213; also Naturalism, p.23.

65. Sellars, Realism, p.62; also Sellars, Naturalism, p.51; Roy Wood Sellars, The Philosophy Of Physical Realism (New York, 1932), pp.130-31.

66. Ibid, p.77.

67. Sellars, Naturalism, pp.135-36.

these essences. Thus Sellars sounds like a neo-realist when he says a view of knowledge is needed which will satisfy "the teaching contained in the Advance of the Personal while looking upon the object known as independent of the knower. . ."⁶⁸

Objective relativism in Lovejoy's outline of the "Revolt Against Dualism" represented a revolt against dualism in one of its stages. But it was also a revolt Lovejoy was not fully aware of: a revolt against some of the concepts upon which Lovejoy based his own position as well as his polemic against objective relativism. His outline of the "natural realistic creed"--various "natural" assumptions about the "cognoscenda" (or "things-to-be-known-if-possible")--contains the language of the traditional inner-outer dualism. One such assumption, e.g., refers to many cognoscenda being assumed to be external to the percipient's body.⁶⁹ The assumption is implicit that since knowledge takes place in experience, a dualism is warranted because being "in experience" means being in the organism.

Another abstraction objective relativism was revolting against, but which Lovejoy and the early realists generally were adhering to, was the assumption of a reality or world as the object of knowledge that differed radically from the report of it that our knowledge was assumed to give. The problem was usually stated in terms of reconciling what our perceptions reported about the world with the more advanced kind of reporting scientific knowledge made. And even perception itself was taken to be an erroneous report of the world at times. Memory, cognition, all perceiving, demonstrate a "temporal sundering," as Lovejoy put it, and therefore an "existential duality" of "content given and reality made known to us through that content." However, the objective-relativist critique actually undercut Lovejoy's

68. Sellars, Realism, p.183.

69. Lovejoy, Dualism, p.12.

entire "natural realistic creed." In so doing, it removed at once the antecedent of his implication: "if you postulate the externality of the entities to be known in any one of the five ways" listed, "then in that specific case your knowledge cannot be direct."⁷⁰

The same thing happened with the question of the numerical identity or diversity between datum and its object. The insurgent against dualism

. . . must either prove that the percept or the memory-content is identical with the object perceived or remembered, or, if not that, he must definitely show how and where another place in the physical world is to be found for both percepts and memories . . . ⁷¹

Since the objective relativist was undercutting both Lovejoy's implication and his disjunction, and since Lovejoy had said they had to be avoided if dualism was to be avoided, the suggestion is that objective relativism did in fact offer an alternative to monism or dualism. But Lovejoy does not appear to be aware of this possibility. At one time D. S. Mackay pointed out to Lovejoy that he had overlooked the possibility that the pragmatists he was criticizing were entertaining a new concept of the object of knowledge. He accused Lovejoy of clinging to a concept of knowledge as predicative rather than indicative. Mackay claimed that the problem is not that of the identity of a subjective datum versus objective existence in the various instances Lovejoy cited as examples of the displacement between datum and its object (like bent sticks in water and knowledge of the past). The problem has to do with tentative, incomplete meaning becoming established (i.e., controlling or objective), or rejected (i.e., not controlling, hence subjective).⁷²

70. Ibid, p.25.

71. Ibid, pp.32-3.

72. D. S. Mackay, "The Displacement Of The Sense-Datum," Journal Of Philosophy, 1932, XXIX, p.258.

The notion that knowledge has to do with something other than physical objects, or the essences of these objects, is in the various proposals of meaning as the proper object of knowledge. Thus Murphy pointed out that what was indirect in knowledge was not representation, but things meaning or indicating other things, like ashes meaning fire.⁷³

Objective relativism--certainly in its early form of experimentalism--was, as we shall see, bringing the notion of perception as a case of knowledge into question. And this was directly due to its critique of the substantial distinction of objectivity and subjectivity. But again Lovejoy appears to be unaware of this as he refers to "perceptual knowledge" and the "object of perceptual knowledge" in his critique.⁷⁴

The critique of the realist concept of reality or nature, with its associated critique of the separation of objectivity and subjectivity or relativity which was displayed in the early stages of objective relativism in a critique of the notion of perception as a case of knowledge, were aspects of objective relativism that were more often than not overlooked by its critics. Even some who identified themselves with objective relativism failed to see this completely. For example, A. P. Ushenko made a formidable effort in his Power And Events to cope with the problem of reconciling "transformation" and "conformation" in knowledge. The answer lies for Ushenko in a critique of the notion that the event known is antecedently determinate; i.e., that it is something static and ready-made to which knowledge refers back.

There is no doubt that realization which turns potentiality into actuality is a modification or transformation; yet . . . change

73. A. E. Murphy, "Mr. Lovejoy's Counter-Revolution," Journal Of Philosophy, 1931, XXVIII, p.40.

74. Lovejoy, Dualism, pp.262-63.

through realization is never literally distortion or falsification.⁷⁵

Still, in his idea of "conformation," he clings to the usual notion of the nature of knowledge, even though he has challenged the traditional idea of its object. The "conformation" involved is a conforming of potentialities. But these potentialities are "realized" in knowledge. Does another conformation arise here? Ushenko's "perspective theory of truth" holds that the truth of a proposition consists in "a conformal transformation of an objective disposition."⁷⁶ The whole point is that in claiming the objects of knowledge to be indeterminate events, and at the same time holding a view of the nature of knowledge as somehow conforming to these events (or some other unspecified objects), it is difficult to see how such a theory can find an instance of strict conformation. It is as if an experimental pragmatism has run afoul of a lingering traditional realism.

While it is true that Lovejoy did grapple with some of the new concepts of objective relativism, and probably had some reason for being perplexed, still he approached them without being fully aware of the extent of the objective-relativist critique of abstractions.⁷⁷ In direct reply to Lovejoy's criticisms, E. B. McGilvary noted the same point. In this case it was Lovejoy's geometry:

In sum, we cannot put the new doctrine of the objective relativist into the framework of the older physics with its prim space where things have 'simple location.' Whitehead's alternative to simple location is not the only one.⁷⁸

Objective relativism, he insists, cannot be dislodged by using Euclidean

75. A. P. Ushenko, Power And Events; An Essay On Dynamics In Philosophy (Princeton, 1946), pp.11-12.

76. Ibid, pp.60-1.

77. Lovejoy, Dualism, pp.147-50.

78. E. B. McGilvary, "The Revolt Against Dualism," Philosophical Review, 1931, XL, p.257.

geometry and the Aristotelian logic of subsumption as a purchase.⁷⁹

Yet Pratt could only see a verbal problem involved between critical realism and objective relativism:

since the objective relativist likes the word objective and dislikes the word subjective, I do not object to his using it . . . there is a pretty sharp line between those qualities of 'a physical thing' which it owes to its relations to percipient events and those which it owes to its relations to non-percipient events. Common speech has always marked this undeniable difference by using the word subjective for the former and objective for the latter--but never mind. No philosophical or epistemological issue is here involved.⁸⁰

It is therefore a serious and a difficult question whether objective relativism is a genuine attempt to get away from Dualism, or merely the proposal of a new terminology.⁸¹

3. EXPERIMENTAL PRAGMATISM

The rise of experimental pragmatism marks the first appearance of a genuine objective relativism. It was a "realism without monism or dualism," suggesting that it sought to mediate between the extremes of neo- and critical realism without rejecting either of them. Experimental pragmatism could be described as a position that brought a thoroughgoing relativism (experimentalism) together with a neo-realist position. As I have already suggested, there was much of critical realism involved also.

Here and later on we will note the difference between an objective relativism that has in its background neo-realism with its lingering "epistemology," and an objective relativism with a pragmatic background that avoided the problem of knowledge at the outset.

Experimental pragmatism was destined to be more successful than either of the realisms in its attempt to answer the "subject-object" problem because

79. Ibid, p.265.

80. Pratt, Realism, pp.184-85.

81. Ibid, p.183.

it was clearly dedicated to reconciling the various conflicting answers that had already been given. That is, it more truly integrated by pointing out new contexts within which to place traditional dualisms as functional distinctions. This is what Dewey once referred to as "the Hegelian bacillus of reconciliation of contradictories in me."⁸² A position like objective relativism would have been impossible without this Hegelian legacy. It is, indeed, this very trait that marks its success with the "subject-object" problem.

Vital to its attempt is the element of experiment or action in its theories. I have already noted that not all realists were unaware of the need to take this factor into account. Pratt reminded them of what the pragmatist was reminding them:

. . . that the structure of our science is built up out of the answers that Nature gives to our questions, that the kind of questions asked determines the kind of answer given, and that we have to ask the questions . . . the fact that everything which goes into our science must be 'categorized'--made specific, defined--by means of thought, is a fact that needs to be kept before our attention.⁸³

In presenting the details of this early objective relativism and how it mediated between the two realistic positions, I will rely largely on the objective relativism of John Dewey. This is not to imply that his is the only statement of it. However, it is my conviction that, given the task I have outlined for my dissertation, Dewey's statement of objective relativism should play a central role in it. Later a statement in a different terminology will be presented. But Dewey's is still an objective relativism that demonstrates best the points I wish to make about it. Thus I will be more concerned to use his statements to make my points than to

82. John Dewey in a letter to William James, quoted Perry, James, II, p.523.

83. Pratt, Realism, pp.95-6.

criticize his objective relativism.

From the beginning, this early objective relativism avoided the problem of knowledge by taking "subject" and "object" to be together. The distinction between them is functional rather than metaphysical. Objectivity and subjectivity are therefore not substantively different. In starting from such a position, objective relativism undercut one whole group of problems that had occupied the realists. This is not to say that some realists in both camps had not denied the traditional metaphysical distinction. Dewey's early statement is not unlike their statements. The world of fact and the world of ideas, he said, are

two correspondent objective statements of the active process itself--correspondent because each has a work to do, in the doing of which it needs to be helped out by the other.⁸⁴

His Radical Empiricism pluralized Reality into realities, each with the same metaphysical status. The "postulate of immediate empiricism" was that a horse, for example, for a logician, a psychologist, and a metaphysician is equally real so that in each case we do not have instances of varying degrees of approximation to a reality, but rather a contrast "between different reals of experience." And when "an experience" is mentioned "something" is always meant.⁸⁵ Radical empiricism for Dewey meant "a thing is what it is experienced as," or "the world is as it is experienced." But Dewey entered a caveat that was not always noted by his critics. This was not to mean the "root-paralogism of all idealisms"--that a thing, or Reality, was just what a knower, or "experienter" finds it to be. Dewey's radical empiricism does not say that is all reality is.

The attribution of validity or reality to all experiences is truly a

84. John Dewey, The Influence Of Darwin On Philosophy And Other Essays (New York, 1910), p.228.

85. Ibid, pp.230-31.

basic point of objective relativism. It means, as Dewey pointed out, that when I start at the sound of a noise, that noise is really fearsome, it is what it is experienced to be. When, however, I see that the noise is a tapping window shade, then the experience has changed. It does not mean that an unreality has given way to a reality, or that the truth has changed. It is undoubtedly a truer experience, but not a more real one. Involved in the distinction is the difference between perception and cognition: "I-am-frightened," and "I-know-I-am-frightened."

This is, of course, what several realists had recognized when they accepted the fact of perspective or relativism, with this difference, however, that they were obliged to draw sceptical or agnostic conclusions where Dewey and the other objective relativists were not. Dewey denied that knowledge is a disclosure of "what is there," or any allied notion of an "absolute reality." To be sure, it begins with reality, but with a reality and not the reality. And it ends with another reality, the outcome of the inquiry, the problematic situation resolved. Dewey agreed with the neo-realist that it was the world or existence that was present in knowledge, but it was not the world of the neo-realist. It was not the neo-realist (and critical-realist) world in at least two ways. First, it was a world in or of processes. Hence the world as an object of knowledge was not the same at the outset of knowledge or inquiry as it was at the conclusion. Second, the objective-relativist world was not presupposed to be what knowledge must either reproduce or tell us about what is there. The objective relativist was thus prepared for the discrepancy between scientific knowledge of the world and the naive common sense notion of it. Where the developments in science had meant dualism, agnosticism, or phenomenalism for others, for the objective relativists it was proof that knowledge was not an attempted approximation to a reproduction of reality--a view condemned to failure at

the outset. In place of it, Dewey offered his theory of knowledge as inquiry, and a new concept of experience.

Behind the difference between the realist and the objective relativist was a new view of the world or nature, and the function of the organism in it; a new cosmology or metaphysics. For many of the realists, knowledge was not what it was for the pragmatic realist: "something that happens to things in the natural course of their career." The new objective-relativist view of nature also differed distinctly from the realist view in its treatment of subjective or relative factors. These are what Sellars referred to as "The Personal," and what the neo-realists called "the personal equation," or "the facts of relativity." Factors such as doubt, belief, uncertainty, and bias, which were traditionally viewed as a part of a substantially different realm than that of the natural, objective world, were now viewed as members in full standing, as characteristics of the world itself. This in spite of the fact that they may have as their focal centers, and hence as their necessary conditions, sentient organisms. The subjective-objective distinction was no longer a radical dualism. But there remained the task of elaborating the relations these relativistic factors sustain with the rest of the world. In short, relativism and objectivity had to be synthesized.

Dewey was aware that while he was setting forth a realism, it was not one of the current realisms. He referred to it at various times as "pragmatic realism," or again as "naive realism." (Not, however, the naive realism of neo-realism.) Dewey distinguished between instrumentalism and realism, in which both agree thinking is instrumental rather than constitutive, but for realism it is instrumental to knowledge of objects and for instrumentalism it is instrumental for control of the environment; a control which is effected through acts which would not be undertaken without thinking.⁸⁶

86. John Dewey, Essays In Experimental Logic (Chicago, 1916), p.30.

The difference rests on their respective theories of nature and experience which were at the bottom of all the disagreement between the objective relativists and the realists. So it is also the basis for the middle or third way of objective relativism.

The difference in the respective basic concepts now are apparent. The static world or reality of both groups of realists is replaced by realities in process. Thinking arises in these processes for the purpose of directing their course to solve problems, un-block conduct, and not to reproduce these realities. Knowledge or thinking is not a mere beholding or grasping.⁸⁷ There is change involved in this action of thought: a change both in reality and in the knower because both are actively in the process to begin with; whereas for the realist it never meant more than a change in the knower. But notice that the change is always physical because it is a "redirection given to changes already going on . . . responsive behavior which changes in time the subject-matter to which it applies."⁸⁸

Yet Dewey's position is "frankly realistic" in recognizing the existence of "certain brute existences" in no way constituted by thought, which set every problem for reflection and hence serve as a test of its results. But he does not equate these existences with the whole content of the "problematic situation," nor with the resulting objects of knowledge.

There is in Dewey's use of the term "objects of knowledge" a genuine ambiguity. For example, he pointed out that the realist appeals to the things of the world, not (as the realist thinks) as objects, but as evidence, as a means of knowing his conclusion, his real object of knowledge.⁸⁹

87. Ibid, p.32.

88. John Dewey, "The Need For A Recovery Of Philosophy," in Dewey et al, Creative Intelligence (New York, 1917), p.61.

89. Dewey, Essays, pp.44-5.

In this use, objects of knowledge are results of the use of means (data or ideas) to transform the given into a truth to be stated in a proposition; they are outcomes of inquiry: "the object of knowledge is not something with which thinking sets out, but something with which it ends. . ."90

But there is another meaning of "object of knowledge" for Dewey, a meaning not associated with this view of knowledge as a process in which its outcome is different from its beginning (other than mere temporal or spatial displacement). When this notion of "object of knowledge" is used by Dewey--what it is we "think about," instead of what is produced by inquiry--we find that it refers to meanings. Meanings are genuinely and existentially suggested by the data of a situation. Meaning is the "characteristic object of thought."⁹¹ And Dewey identified the consequences of the experimenter's manipulations with such meanings (reducing "things" to "data"): "the ultimate objects of science are guided processes of change."⁹² Validity of meaning is a reference to something which is not mere meaning, but rather its functional or instrumental use in effecting the transition from a relatively conflicting experience to a relatively integrated one. But note in both cases how the object is made or constructed.

But if Dewey's notion of the object of knowledge is clearer once these distinctions are observed, the introduction of "meaning" complicates the problem anew. For Dewey, "meaning" could be the conception or definition of an object; or, the denotative existential reference of an idea; or, actual value or importance. "While the meaning of an object is the change it requires in our attitude, the meaning of an idea is the changes it, as our attitude, effects in objects."⁹³ The third meaning of "meaning" would arise

90. Ibid, p.334.

91. Ibid, p.158.

92. Dewey, Nature, p.160.

93. Dewey, Essays, pp.310-11.

29

in the case of things already true, or taken to be true. "Meaning here means value, importance." Again: "meanings in their logical quality are standpoints, attitudes, and methods of behaving toward facts."⁹⁴ In terms of stimulus and response, when a thing ceases to operate directly as a stimulus to response and "begins to operate in connection with a forecast of the consequences it will effect when responded to, it begins to acquire meaning--to be known, to be an object."⁹⁵

Dewey set forth his "Realism Without Monism or Dualism" in reply to Lovejoy's critique of the pragmatic handling of knowledge of the past. With a presupposition that knowledge must reproduce an object or reality existing antecedently to inquiry, Lovejoy's "temporalism" led him to conclude that all perception, cognition and experience is removed from its object by the passage of time and by space (the temporal and spatial displacement of datum and object). Now the pragmatist is an "immediatist"; he must "immediately experience" his object of knowledge. How, asks Lovejoy, in the face of this temporal and spatial displacement of datum and object, can the pragmatist have any knowledge of the past? A consistent pragmatism would be forced to recognize that all instrumental knowledge is, or at least includes and requires, "presentative" knowledge: a "representation of not-present existents by present data."

It should be noted that "presentative" as Lovejoy uses it does not mean the same as it does when used in connection with the direct theory of knowledge or perception (i.e., the theory of immanence) of neo-realism. There it refers to the fact that nothing stands between "subject" and "object." Here, however, Lovejoy means something is between them, something other than the "object" is presented to the "subject." But the radical-empiricist demand (in concert with the neo-realist theory of immanence) that in order for

94. Ibid, pp.331-32.

95. Dewey, Intelligence, p.48.

a thing to be known it must be given, present, actually possessed in a definite bit of concrete experience, is the "corruption" of pragmatism for Lovejoy.⁹⁶ Lovejoy's mis-reading of radical empiricism was undoubtedly influenced by his own dualism. While what is known must for the pragmatist be given or actually possessed in experience, Lovejoy assumed that the "what-is-known" is an object that knowledge begins and ends with. It is obvious that the pragmatist on Lovejoy's view could not claim to have the object of knowledge in experience, because that object is by (Lovejoy's) definition spatially and temporally separated from the experience to begin with.

Dewey's reply pointed out that the true object of a judgment about a past event is a "past-event-having-a-connection-continuing-into-the-present-and-future."⁹⁷ The problem of transcendence in knowledge, in present knowledge about past events, is obviated once it is seen that

thoughts about the past hang upon present observable events and are verified by future predicted or anticipated events which are capable of entering into direct presentation.⁹⁸

Not only the "machinery of transcendence," but also "epistemological dualism (or monism)" is eliminated, and Dewey explicitly rejected all need for "instinctive" bases for knowledge, or any "will-to-believe" type of pragmatism. What goes for knowledge of the past, applies to the future.

Now in every case of inference or reflection, there is mediation of an object by some other entity which points to or signifies or represents or gives witness to or evidence of.⁹⁹

96. Lovejoy, Essays, p.79.

97. John Dewey, "Realism Without Monism Or Dualism," Journal Of Philosophy, 1922, XIX, p.311.

98. Ibid, p.316.

99. Ibid, p.353.

But it becomes knowledge only when such mediating is borne out, verified in something directly present, immediately experienced--not immediately known. The object has to be reached (in action, let it be noted) to get validation or invalidation, and when so reached it is immediately present. Its cognitive status is mediated, however: "Thus we arrive at a union of immediate and mediate in knowledge, instead of their sharp distinction."¹⁰⁰

Dewey was not as clear as he might have been in talking about the object being "reached" and hence immediately present to be verified, while still mediated to be known. How could we ever say that anything past is immediately reached or present? The fact is that Dewey is referring here to "object" in the sense of outcome of inquiry, and not in the sense of an object antecedently existing. He is not saying that in knowledge of the past we somehow immediately experience a past object or event. On the other hand, as Lovejoy asked, just what of the past could Dewey say is immediately experienced or "had"?

Lovejoy's disjunction of "either dualism or monism" is not exhaustive then, Dewey claims:

There remains pluralistic realism which is precisely the theory I have advanced . . . Things are things, not mental states. Hence the realism.¹⁰¹ But the things are indefinitely many. Hence the pluralism.

In reply, Lovejoy appears to make a point concerning Dewey's Pluralistic Realism as an alternative to the monism-dualism disjunction. The pluralism distinction, he maintained, is not on the same level as the monist-dualist distinction and thus does not pertain to the disjunction. This would be true except for this factor: Dewey's pluralism reflects his

100. Ibid, pp.353-54.

101. Ibid, p.356.

rejection of the realist concept of one static "Reality" as a world-view in favor of a plurality of realities, and realities in process. Thus he is striking at the very level upon which Lovejoy's distinction rests. Dewey is offering a new context in which new alternatives are possible.

Some may question whether Dewey's position did in fact contain monism and dualism; whether his "realism without monism or dualism" does represent an inclusion of the two extremes. The monist and the dualist demurred. Yet it is my belief that the truth of these positions is there; there is an accounting for mediatism and immediatism, for representation and presentation. To be sure, these are not the monist and dualist conceptions. But they are not, precisely because the position was a synthesis or reconciliation of the two, and to be such it must perforce be different from both. And both will be different when viewed together in the synthesis than when considered separately.

A revised notion of objectivity is in Dewey's interpretation of it to mean controlling conditions of action, which for him was in no way incompatible with a "common-sense realistic theory of perception."¹⁰²

Anything is objective in so far as, through the medium of conflict, it controls the movement of experience in its reconstructive transition. There is not first an object, whether of sense perception or of conception, which afterward somehow exercises this controlling influence; but the objective is any existence exercising the function of control.¹⁰³

The contribution of neo-realism to the objective-relativist revision of subjectivity is apparent when Dewey, citing with approval Woodbridge's writings on consciousness, deals with the "mental": "To be 'in the mind'

102. Dewey, Darwin, pp.214-15.

103. Dewey, Essays, p.171. Note the identification of objectivity and action.

means to be in a situation in which the function of intending is directly concerned."¹⁰⁴ That is, the neo-realist, under the influence of James' statement of consciousness, had established that the "mental" or "being in the mind" no longer meant being separate from the rest of the world or nature. Perry defined content of mind, for example, as "that portion of the surrounding environment which is taken account of by the organism in serving its interests . . ."¹⁰⁵ The subjective-objective distinction no longer needed to be one of inner and outer. Now it was possible to view it as a functional distinction. The integration of objectivity and relativity or subjectivity by objective relativism is accomplished on a different basis from the old outer-inner distinction. Lapan has pointed out the naturalistic influences that were at work here in speaking of the shift in James' writings from a "psychology of consciousness" to "pure experience." It was

nothing less than a shift from the classic separation between man and nature toward their reunion; it was a transition from an overdue emphasis on man to an emphasis upon the world in which man lives. It endeavored to place man in a new context, in the context of nature of which man is a part. In so doing it was instrumental in effecting a radical alteration in the theory of nature and of man's place within it... Nature was so conceived that the existence of perception, knowledge and communication no longer became a problem; and human nature became an actualization of nature's potentialities . . .¹⁰⁶

Another factor behind the critiques of these traditional abstractions was the individualism in objective relativism. Writing on the history of the 17th century problem of knowledge, Dewey pointed out that the rising science and increasing freedom from state and church controls made philosophy the conscious awareness of the claim of the individual to be able to discover and verify truth himself. The question "how is knowledge possible?"

104. Dewey, Darwin, p.104.

105. Perry, Tendencies, p.300 romanized.

106. Arthur Lapan, The Significance Of James' Essay (PhD Thesis, 1936, Department of Philosophy, Columbia University, New York), p.vi.

also includes "how is knowledge possible?"

How, that is, shall the individual be able to back himself up by truth which has no authority save that of its own intrinsic truthfulness. Science, on the other hand, is simply this general faith or creed asserting itself in detail . . . ¹⁰⁷

Various philosophers in America after the turn of the century were feeling the forces of this individualism; it was at least a part of what the neo-realists referred to as "the facts of relativity." Further, it is my contention that the whole problem of relativism, the serious attempt to account for it in objective relativism, is a direct result of these individualistic influences. The relative, personal, subjective, were taking on a new meaning, a meaning that was no longer deprecatory:

The individualistic movement of modern life detached, as it were, the individual, and allowed personal (i.e., intra-organic) events to have, transitively and temporarily, a worth of their own. These events are continuous with extra-organic events (in origin and eventual outcome); but they may be considered in temporary displacement as uniquely existential . . . So treated, they are tentative, dubious but experimental, anticipations of an object. They are 'subjective' (i.e., individualistic) surrogates of public, cosmic things, which may be so manipulated and elaborated as to terminate in public things which without them would not exist as empirical objects.¹⁰⁸

My added emphasis points up what I have been saying: in the integration of the objective and the subjective, objective relativism saved both by pointing out how they are meaningless if they are separated to the extent traditional thought had separated them. Objective relativism was saying that in knowledge we have a case of the world or nature turning back on itself and knowing itself. The presence of mind means a self-consciousness

107. Dewey, Darwin, pp.287-88.

108. Dewey, Essays, pp.227-28 my emphasis.

of nature and not a dualistic notion of a knower or mind knowing nature.

The breakdown of dualism in this way could only mean that the relative or subjective had to be integrated with the objective, instead of set off opposed to it. Even Lovejoy was aware of this when he distinguished between subjective and objective in terms other than those of the substantial distinctions of dualism. Objectivity meant the discrimination between those features of the datum which report characters possessed by the external existent and the locus of reference, and those which are additions or modifications due to the cognitive event, and therefore as existing only at the locus of givenness.¹⁰⁹ Or again, a judgment is epistemologically subjective

"in so far as it also relates to properties which are dependent upon a 'standpoint,' viz., the optical constitution of the human animal."¹¹⁰ It is epistemologically objective "in so far as it transcends both my present and my permanent individual standpoint . . ."¹¹¹ Thus objectivity belongs to it by virtue of its asserting something which is not relative to a standpoint; the subjectivity by virtue of its asserting something which is so relative. So far as the objectivity is assumed to reach, so far knowledge is claimed; so far as the subjectivity is assumed to reach, so far the claim to positive knowledge is denied.¹¹²

Lovejoy's basic commitment to the dualistic distinction of subjective and objective is revealed, however, in his interpretation of science and Relativity Theory. Here he suggests that because science seeks to eliminate the subjective or relative from its considerations, therefore a philosophical interpretation of objectivity will view it as the absence of subjectivity or

109. Lovejoy, Dualism, p.317.

110. Ibid, p.133.

111. Ibid, p.133.

112. Ibid, pp.133-34.

relativity (instead of viewing the two as mutually implied as objective relativism would). Science does in fact seek to eliminate the subjective or relative from its statements or conclusions. This does not mean, however, that the relative or subjective is not still operative in science. The scientist can afford to ignore these factors, not so the philosopher.

Another statement from Dewey brings out the individualistic factor in objective relativism, tying it up with relativity and experiment. "Instrumental experimentalism," he says, brings into prominence

the importance of the individual. It is he who is the carrier of creative thought, the author of action, and of its application. Subjectivism is an old story in philosophy . . . But American philosophy . . . has given to the subject, to the individual mind, a practical rather than an epistemological function. The individual mind is important because only the individual mind is the organ of modifications in traditions and institutions, the vehicle of experimental creation . . . And the individual which American thought idealizes is not an individual per se, an individual fixed in isolation and set up for himself, but an individual who evolves and develops in a natural and human environment, an individual who can be educated.¹¹³

As soon as this individualistic, relativistic notion was broached by objective relativists, it was pounced upon with interminable "bent-stick-parallel-tracks-elliptical-penny" arguments. All of them usually came down to the question of whether the objective relativist, in his desire to grant a certain validity to all experiences, could still provide anything like a standard experience, object, or fact (usually meaning objectivity). There was, Lovejoy held, a "general deliquescence of the notion of factual truth and falsity" among these objective relativists.¹¹⁴

There were two general ways of dealing with the problem of multiple properties in the relativism of the objective relativists. There was the

113. John Dewey, Philosophy And Civilization (New York, 1931), pp.33-4.

114. Lovejoy, Dualism, p.125.

way of perspectives that we will examine in the last chapter: All of the different shapes, sizes, dates, etc., are "perspectival appearances;" all attributable, to be sure, to the object, but to the object from particular perspectives or viewpoints. And there are physical and non- or "epiphysical," perceptual and conceptual (or cognitive) perspectives. For the functional group, perspectives do not figure so prominently because "contexts" parallel them to a great extent. The radical-empiricist thesis of "the world is as it is experienced" has implied in it, of course, the notion of perspective.

However, a great deal of the lucubration over the problem of perception was undercut by the denial that perception was a case of knowledge. The problem smacked of the old problem of knowledge of modern philosophy: what Dewey invidiously termed epistemology. There was a legitimate problem so long as perception was taken as a case of knowledge. It was patent that perception was shot through with contradiction and illusion. If perception meant knowledge, then our knowledge was contradictory and illusory. The dualist, or critical realist, generally took the attitude that the contradiction was the subjective element due to the perceiver. More precisely, it was traceable to the data or essences that stood between "subject" and "object." The monist, or neo-realist, took the opposite tack that the contradiction was objective; i.e., a part of the world itself (some neo-realists proposing as an alternative an "existence-subsistence" distinction which was often close to the dualist answer).

Demonstrating again my thesis in this chapter, the objective relativists took the middle position by undercutting the distinction the monists and dualists were using. Perception was not a case of knowledge at all; therefore, it was meaningless to describe perception as right or wrong. Error

was a matter of overlooking the perspectival or contextual aspect of perception; a matter of mistaken inference. This was the approach used by Paul Marhenke.¹¹⁵

Underlying Dewey's approach was his concept of experience. Illusion, dreams, secondary qualities, were accepted as valid rather than thought of in terms of a mind, consciousness or "subject" subjectivizing or relativizing them. They do not occur, to be sure,

save when there are organic centers of experience. They cluster about a subject. But to treat them as things which inhere exclusively in the subject; or as posing the problem of a distortion of the real object by a knower set over against the world . . . is to testify that one has still to learn the lesson of evolution in its application to the affairs in hand.¹¹⁶

That lesson of evolution was that "experience" means

primarily not knowledge, but ways of doing and suffering. Knowing must be described by discovering what particular mode--qualitatively unique--of doing and suffering it is.¹¹⁷

Perceptions are not cases of knowledge. They are "simply natural events having, in themselves (apart from a use that may be made of them), no more knowledge status or worth than, say, a shower or a fever."¹¹⁸ It was this view of perceptions as natural events with entirely physical explanations that Dewey identified as "naive realism." Viewing perception as a case of knowledge, on the other hand, is what he identified as "presentative realism." Thus, in Dewey's view, both neo-realism and critical realism could be presentative realisms. Presentative realism was also identified by Dewey as "epistemological realism." The view of perception as a case of

115. Paul Marhenke, "The Problem Of Error," University Of California Publications In Philosophy (Berkeley, 1928), X, p.166.

116. Dewey, Intelligence, p.36.

117. Ibid, p.37.

118. Dewey, Essays, pp.253-54.

knowledge leads directly to the traditional problem of knowledge: the problem of the possibility, nature and extent in general of knowledge. And this is what Dewey called epistemology.

Perception then, for Dewey, is a "relation to organic activity, not to a knower, or mind."¹¹⁹ It is no more than a natural, physical, organic event until knowing or thinking occurs. But the presentative realists, in taking perception as a case of knowledge, include in perception a relation to a mind thus making this relation the explanation of any difference that exists between a causal object and the resulting image.

Lovejoy's favorite argument for dualism was based on the example of the observation of the light of a star as it reaches earth many years after it left the star. We manifestly cannot see the star but only the effects of the star, he claimed. But such a presentative-realist view, Dewey pointed out, must include in the single observation knowledge not only of the light observed now, but also of the star as its cause many years earlier. Perception is knowledge on this view. Our knowledge, however, includes the knowledge that it takes many years for us to see the light emitted from a star. Hence a perception of a star's light must also include a perception of the star. But this was what the presentative realist was trying to avoid. Dewey pointed out to him that taking perception as a case of knowledge meant that we perceive things and also perceive things as known. But even the realist's common man takes his perceptions as things, and not as things known. As a perceiver, "he is in the attitude of a liker or hater" or some other mode of doing or suffering. "When he takes the attitude of a knower he begins to inquire."¹²⁰

Later Dewey stated it this way: Perceptions exist for the most part

119. Ibid, p.256 note.

120. Ibid, p.258.

in another dimension from that of truth and error, "whose nature may be suggested by reference to imagination, fancy, reveries, affection, love and hate, desire, happiness and misery."¹²¹ To say that a perception is cognitive means "that it is used; it is treated as a sign of conditions that implicate other as yet unperceived consequences in addition to the perception itself. . . ."¹²² Dewey once distinguished his position from idealism on the basis that it does not require thought to see and to hear any more than to digest, though after thought has intervened such actions may be performed better.¹²³

If perception is indeed a case of knowledge, then the knowledge or cognitive relation is ubiquitous; i.e., it covers all instances of doing, suffering, and knowing. The question of the "subject-object" relation then becomes meaningless because the cognitive relation is the only relation between them, defining exclusively and exhaustively all connections between knower and thing known. It is indefinable then, and we are in the "ego-centric predicament." If, however, other connections or relations than just the cognitive are allowed, then an intelligible contrast can be drawn between things as known, as loved, as hated, as seen, heard, appreciated, etc. Mind is not present until the perception is used to infer something about the environment. Then error occurs only in the case of a false or erroneous inference.¹²⁴

This points to that important factor generally left out by the realists: action. The realists overlooked the fact that the other term indicated by a perception is the responsive act. There is error in the bent-stick example only when we infer that the stick rather than the light is bent; an

121. Dewey, Nature, p.310.

122. Ibid, pp.323-24.

123. John Dewey, "Objects, Data, And Existence: A Reply To Professor McGilvary," Journal Of Philosophy, 1909, VI, p.20.

124. Dewey, Essays, p.274 note.

error a fisherman never makes.¹²⁵

F. J. E. Woodbridge was not going along with the realists on this question. For him deceptions of sense were not significant for cognition, but for action. And further, speculative theories of knowledge are independent of any empirical evidence to be derived from the fact that the senses deceive; i.e., error is not properly an epistemological problem.¹²⁶ Deception does not consist in any distortion of reality if that means that reality appears to us in ways in which it ought not to appear.

The way in which things appear to us is the natural result of discoverable conditions . . . The appearances deceive us, not by being what they should not be, but by leading us to do what we should not do--to think that reality is what it is not or to use things as if they were not what they are.¹²⁷

We would not be led into error if "we did not react to things as they appear to us." The senses are not deceitful, although we may be deceived by them. Cognition arises "only as we react to these appearances. The deception of the senses is significant, then, not for cognition, but for action . . .

The senses deceive us because, not revealing the causes why things appear as they do, we are led astray. The moment we discover that it is water which makes the stick appear bent, we can allow for the refraction and be satisfied. But this is not a matter of epistemology, but of action, of stimulus and response.¹²⁸

125. Ibid, p.398.

126. F. J. E. Woodbridge, Nature And Mind (New York, 1937), pp.389 ff.

127. Ibid, p.391.

128. Ibid, p.392,394. This goes back in American philosophy as far as Peirce, at least, who said that all our percepts are objectively real, and that we never correct them nor do we correct what he identified as "perceptual judgments." We do correct or inhibit the tendency to act, think, and speak as that particular perception prompts us to do. W. B. Gallie, Peirce And Pragmatism (Hammondsworth, Middlesex, 1952), p.106.

This is the truth of Aristotle's hint about theories of perception: that they are "theories of what is perceived and not the validation of perception itself."¹²⁹

On the question of appearances, images, or ideas:

... we are deceived not because the appearances of things are not cognitively or representatively adequate--there being no cognition or representation involved--but because the appearance of things to us is not alone sufficient to enable us to react effectively. If it were, not only would the senses never deceive us, but we should have no use for consciousness or knowledge.¹³⁰

Images or appearances are stimuli to thinking and doing, not cognitive or cognitively representative. Knowledge comes into play not in having them, but in reacting to them; they are not means to knowledge, they are items with which our knowing deals. Our knowledge is not of them, but of propositions about them.¹³¹ And the conversion of the fact that things appear in various ways into an assumption of an order of existences which are "mental" or "psychical," and yet have many physical properties, "is to make an assumption which is not self-evident, but which demands the most careful scrutiny and the most unequivocal evidence."¹³²

I have dealt extensively with these points here not only to set forth the non-cognitive theory of perception, but also to develop the importance of action in objective relativism. The non-cognitive theory is important for an objective-relativist position in its implicit critique of the dualism of the cognitive theory. It is also important because in the cognitive theory each individual difference in perception is said to be an aberration from true knowledge. Each difference is a change by an individual of a

129. Woodbridge, Nature, p.424. 130. Ibid, pp.395-96.

131. Ibid, p.396. 132. Ibid, pp.400-1.

public or common thing known or believed in, and hence this intervention of the individual is something to be eliminated, rather than something integral to the whole process. The individual or relative element is thus subjective in the traditional sense and a definite obstacle to objectivity.

But there is another point. If perception is in fact non-cognitive, then it is a physical, natural affair. That means that relativity attributable to it will be, in part at least, of a physical kind. However, it is part of my thesis that the relativity of objective relativism is a deliberate taking account of the "subject," or mind. That is, in terms we have encountered here, it must involve the cognitive. And the "subject" that objective relativism seeks to integrate with the "object" is something more than just a physical thing.

Professor McGilvary pointed out that the "subject-object" relation is both physical and non-physical (he called it "epiphysical"). In his later writings he was keenly aware of the need for not only distinguishing physical from non-physical, but also making an integrative statement of the two. He noted that he had not always been aware of the importance of the "something more than" the physical in cases like vision, for example. At one time he had looked upon vision not as an act but as a "relation in which an organism stands to what initiated (or reflected) the light."¹³³ To identify vision as an act would have meant at one time for McGilvary the problem of how the organism sees now what antedates the seeing.

Some years later . . . I came to the conviction that vision, while being an activity of an organism, is something more besides and that something more is itself a relation but not a physical relation. It is a non-physical effect of the activity of the organism initiated by the physical stimulation of the eyes by light from the object seen.¹³⁴

133. McGilvary, Realism, V, p.20. 134. Ibid, V, p.20.

McGilvary is doing here what Dewey and Woodbridge accomplished by their non-cognitive theories of perception. He is aware of the impossibility of dealing adequately with the "subject-object" integration in physical terms alone. Thus he introduces into his concept of consciousness the "epiphsical": the physical plus something more.¹³⁵

McGilvary's writings aptly display the approach to the "subject-object" integration which I have identified as characteristic of objective relativism. That this is to be expected is apparent in his Hegelian background. Again we have a case of the "subject" and "object" not being approached as separate with the intention of either bringing them together, or explaining how they get together. Early in his writings McGilvary showed a willingness to accept, if necessary, both representation and presentation, mediate and immediate knowledge. Immediate knowledge, he said, need not necessarily mean the lack or absence of mediation. In both immediate and representative knowledge there is the mediation of certain processes without which a thing could not be present.¹³⁶ This approach distinguishes McGilvary from both the neo-realist and the critical realist. At the same time he made it clear that he was taking the naive position that conceives the object of vision not as a "modification of consciousness," but as the real thing.¹³⁷ That he was seeking an alternative to the monist-dualist disjunction is evident as early as 1907 when he wrote that there is a third possibility to the alternative of either all "qualities perceived must be, or none can be, numerically identical with 'actual qualities.'" "Why may it not be that some . . . are numerically identical . . . and some numerically different . . .?"¹³⁸ In

135. Ibid, p.21.

136. E. B. McGilvary, "The Physiological Argument Against Realism," Journal Of Philosophy, 1907, IV, p.598.

137. E. B. McGilvary, "Prolegomena To A Tentative Realism," Journal Of Philosophy, 1907, IV, p.453.

138. E. B. McGilvary, "Realism And The Physical World," Journal Of Phil-

a note he added that he was using here the "critic's terminology," and would prefer to think of everything we are aware of as actual in a very fundamental sense. The realist does not deny actuality or reality, but only asserts independence of some of these objects; meaning some can and do exist when there is no awareness of them.¹³⁹ This revised notion of what it means to be a realist reflects a departure from traditional notions of realism that was shared to some extent by all American realists, and in this case especially by the neo-realists. But note how McGilvary's mediation of monism and dualism is not of the nature of the objective-relativist synthesis; thus far he seems to accept the major presuppositions of these positions.

That McGilvary saw objective relativism as a new alternative to some traditional disjunctions is apparent in his replies to Lovejoy. Here again he repeated his willingness to accept both the mediate and the immediate, believing that Lovejoy's most damaging criticism was against an unrestricted form of monism. But it is a different story against a restricted form of monism (or dualism). McGilvary asked, if it took dualism 300 years to get over its "temporary aberrations," may not many of the steps objective relativism had taken prove to be the same thing? In exposing them Lovejoy had not, however, established his unrestricted brand of dualism.¹⁴⁰

McGilvary now found the assumptions of neither neo-realism nor critical realism congenial, yet admitted that he hankered after common sense in his "metaphysical impulse." These assumptions, he said, are the assumption (which the critical realist takes to be knowledge) that there is a physical world, not purely mathematical, ever inaccessible to perception; while the neo-realist assumes (and also takes to be knowledge) that everything

139. Ibid, p.684 note.

140. McGilvary, "Dualism," p.249.

that appears in perception is something that does not depend on being perceived in order to be.¹⁴¹

Speaking of what McGilvary later came to call his philosophy--"Perspective Realism"--Donald Oliver also demonstrated how, as a form of objective relativism, it is a third alternative to naive and critical realism. He used the example of the sweetness of the apple to show how each philosophy handled the problems involved. For naive realism: "This apple is sweet"; for critical realism: "This apple possesses that which has the power of producing sweetness in me and other normally constituted beings"; but for Perspective Realism: "This apple is sweet for me and all other normally constituted human beings."¹⁴²

What this meant to Oliver was that it preserved the "is sweet" of naive realism without unconditionally placing sweetness in the apple, and it avoided the subjectivistic implications in the critical-realist statement.¹⁴³ Oliver reflected the important emendation of naive or neo-realism that perspective realism (i.e., objective relativism) made. Where all perceptions, all things in perception, are objective for the thoroughgoing neo-realist, and all are non-existential essences for the thoroughgoing critical realist, this third position offers a compromise.¹⁴⁴

141. E. B. McGilvary, "Physics And Metaphysics," Journal Of Philosophy, 1932, XXIX, p.374.

142. W. Donald Oliver, "The Logic Of Perspective Realism," Journal Of Philosophy, 1938, XXXV, p.197. There may be a legitimate objection, however, that something important is being begged in his use of "normally constituted."

143. Ibid, p.197.

144. William Savery once referred to McGilvary's Perspective Realism as a "via media between (selective) natural realism and representative realism," William Savery, "The Significance Of Dewey's Philosophy," in P. A. Schilpp ed., The Philosophy Of John Dewey (New York, 1939), p.488. And Ushenko once identified objective relativism as an attempt to "arbitrate between the presentative and the representative theories of perception, or between direct and critical realism." Events, p.204.

What is important to note about this early form of objective relativism is that "subject" and "object" have been integrated by means of the pragmatic concept of experiment or action. If the mediate-immediate distinction could be said to parallel in some way the "subject-object" distinction, Dewey's use of action in his notion that both a knowing and having phase are involved in any cognitive experience demonstrates how action can be a mediatory device.

Now we have already seen in this chapter that the neo-realist position could be identified as an "immediatism," while the critical-realist position could be called a "mediatism." Identifying the early objective relativism as experimentalism, we could say that it was by means of experimentalism that objective relativism sought to mediate the extremes of neo-realism and critical realism.

But there is one more significant point to note. While both neo- and critical realism were indeed realisms, the distinguishing mark between them was the presence in the latter of an element that is distinctly in the idealist idiom: an emphasis on the mediation of mind, knower or "subject." And it was this element, plus the immediatism of neo-realism, that objective relativism sought to integrate with the common realistic elements in both positions. Thus we could identify the common element in the two positions with realism, the element that set off critical from neo-realism with idealism, the use of action or experiment by experimental pragmatism as experimentalism, and it is now possible to see that in a more developed form objective relativism can be said to synthesize realism and idealism by means of experimentalism. It is part of my thesis that in so far as it does this, it fulfills the function of a philosophy.

CHAPTER II

THE RELATIVISM IN OBJECTIVE RELATIVISM

The unique character of objective relativism, its "most original and most controversial" element, centers around its relativism. More precisely, it centers around the combination of relativism with objectivity. In the first chapter the attempt in objective relativism to unite objectivity and subjectivity was displayed. In the following chapter I will be concerned with showing that the relativism of objective relativism means subjectivity (but not "subjectivism"), and that the juxtaposition of "objective" and "relativism" refers to the integration of objectivity and subjectivity. Thus in dealing with the "subject-object" problem, objective relativism challenged the traditional dualism that had substantively separated them.

But the attempt to understand the relativism in objective relativism is immediately confronted with the different meanings given to the term "relativism" or "relativity" in the literature. While relativism has a long history in philosophy there is a relativism that has a history in science. The development of Relativity Theory thrust it into a prominent position. Undoubtedly influenced by this fact, philosophers and scientists have often tended to confuse the two relativisms.

There is also the further complicating factor that many writers referred to being related as a relativity or relativism. It would have been a distinct advantage had they used a term like "relatedness" to refer to that, leaving "relativism" to mean what it has meant in philosophy at least since

the time of Protagoras: a relatedness or relativity to a mind, "subject," or knower.

This chapter will open with an analysis of the paper by Professor A. E. Murphy in which he coined the name "Objective Relativism." From this I will set forth the relativism of objective relativism by returning again to its development among the experimental pragmatists. Here I will demonstrate the more metaphysical aspects of the concepts of objectivity and subjectivity in objective relativism. Extensive attention will be given to the bearings of this new metaphysics on perception theory. Here, as well as in a study of contextualism, the relativism of objective relativism will be more fully delineated. Finally, with this concept more adequately in mind, it will be compared with the relativism of Relativity Theory.

1. TWO MEANINGS OF "RELATIVISM"

In the paper in which he coined the name "objective relativism," Professor Murphy described its "most original and most controversial" element as the union of two propositions formerly held to be incompatible: the proposition of objectively direct knowledge of naive realism, and the proposition that

in spite (or because of) such objectivity such happenings remain ultimately and inescapably relative. Such relativity is hence an ultimate fact about the objective world.¹

In the first chapter I have interpreted the "relativity" Murphy speaks of here to mean relative to mind, knower or "subject." I have further suggested that this relativity is not just physical. It is the relativity that has been traditionally looked upon as incompatible with objectivity; i.e., subjectivity. Because Murphy emphasized so much the fact that objective

1. Murphy, "Relativism," p.122.

relativism meant the union of two incompatible propositions, it seems to me this is the meaning of "relativism" involved.

But in referring to the "ultimate relativity" which objective relativism predicates as a "fact about the objective world," Murphy says that "ultimate" marks objective relativism from the view of objective idealism in which "relations hold within an absolute not itself relative to anything external."² Murphy is speaking here of relations. "Relativism" has now been identified with relations or relatedness. Two concepts then of "relativism" run through the objective-relativist literature, and are invariably confused. One use of "relativism" can refer to just physical relations or relatedness, without thereby referring to a non-physical relation or relatedness to a "subject" or mind. Many writers who deal with relativism thus are not always dealing with the problem that Murphy identified with objective relativism: the combination or integration of two propositions previously held to be incompatible--objectivity and subjectivity. I cannot see how these could be taken to be incompatible if the relativism of objective relativism were not somehow antithetical to the objective. Such a relativism was usually called "subjectivity," and referred to a certain presence, influence or contribution of the "subject." In calling this the more crucial meaning of relativism for objective relativism, I do so with Murphy's statement in mind about the combination of these two propositions.

That there are these two concepts of relativism in Murphy's article can be amply demonstrated. For example, the "misnamed 'theory of relativity'" furnishes another instance, he claims, of this combination of objectivity and relativity. "If that theory proves anything," he says, it proves space and time are ultimately relative, not to mind, but to a given reference

2. Ibid, p.123 note.

system. Space or time in themselves have "no independent meaning."³ Here again Murphy is speaking of relativism as the physical relatedness of the world with, in this case, explicit exclusion of mind. And it can only be this meaning that Murphy has in mind when he goes on to say that objective relativism is an alternative theory to a theory of the Absolute, grounded upon "the ultimacy of the relative."⁴

This meaning is also involved in what Murphy singles out as "the foundation of the whole affair": an "inversion in the relation of objects and events."⁵ Traditionally, events have been the characters of objects, and objects have been considered substantive and primary. Because of the assumed incompatibility of the objective and the relative, no alternative to this notion was thought possible. Thus "objective reality" is assumed to be complete in itself,

and the fact of happening, of occurrence in a given situation or context, is extrinsic to it . . . The theory we are considering transposes this relationship. For it the event is substantive and objects are characters of events. Thus relatedness, in all its complexity and interconnection, is made basic for the objective world.⁶

Murphy makes a detailed analysis of this inversion of events and objects in Whitehead, citing specifically Whitehead's "ether of events." He compares Dewey's "same inversion" with it and concludes that the consequences are identical for both: in Whitehead it is the interrelatedness of the world; for Dewey, it is context and process.⁷ It is my contention that these are not the same thing. They may be connected, but to identify them

3. Ibid, p.123.

4. Ibid, p.125.

5. Ibid, p.125.

6. Ibid, p.126. Note how this view of events as substantive fits in with the objective-relativist critique of the notion of a fixed reality as the nature of the world and the object of our knowledge.

7. Ibid, p.128.

is to overlook an important detail. It will be remembered that Murphy himself excluded mind when talking in terms of the relatedness of the world, or of time and space. It is my point that the relativism in context or process means a relativity to mind or "subject," whereas "interrelatedness," barring explicit reference to them, does not.

The mixture of "finality and dependence, of immediacy and transcendence, is the most pervasive fact about the world as pictured by objective relativism," Murphy says. Dewey expresses this in terms of context, and Whitehead in terms of perspectives.

The relatedness which a perspective sums up and the centeredness to which it bears witness are facts about the world, and basic facts. For they express the very interaction of existing events which is the stuff of reality . . . /objective relativism/ affirms and expresses precisely such interaction. The fact of relativity is here no other than the fact of relatedness.⁸

Note how Murphy has identified perspective, relatedness, and interaction with relativity. The essence of an event, for Murphy's exposition of objective relativism, is interaction, and this means the need for context.⁹ For Whitehead, "significance is the relatedness of things," and this, Murphy thinks, is contextualism for Dewey. Both view the conditions and basis of meaning as the fact of relatedness or interaction. No quality in and by itself is a meaning. Meaning is an "objective natural fact," and the traditional notion of object could not account for meanings being given. But notice how the organism comes into Murphy's picture:

[Characters] belong to the given event in a context and their occurrence is significant of that context. They mean an external world because they are qualities of the world in its relation to the organism, they belong in that relation.¹⁰

8. Ibid, p.132.

9. Ibid, p.135.

10. Ibid, p.137 my emphasis first.

Dewey is cited in support of this. Qualities have reference or meaning because they never were in the organism, but were always of interactions; as much qualities of things as of organisms.¹¹

But Murphy is unwilling to go along with Dewey completely. In a footnote, Murphy says adjectives or meanings may belong to events without reference to mind; that there are adjectives independent of relation to human beings but not independent of some relatedness.¹² Thus Murphy tends to obscure the distinction between a physical relatedness without mind, and the kind of relatedness in which mind or "subject" is present. His position is that meaning can occur sometimes without the presence of mind, and at other times with it. Murphy says Dewey's statement is

precisely the notion of the three term relation or of perspective. Each event . . . is a perspective of the world because its characters belong to it in relation to the world with which it interacts; they are at once properties of the world and of the center, for they are properties of the world in its relation to the center. Is it any wonder that knowledge, occurring within such a world, is a relative affair?¹³

Murphy explicitly identifies event and perspective with Dewey's notion of context, which, it should be remembered, always includes reference to a

11. Ibid, p.137.

12. Ibid, p.137, note.

13. Ibid, p.137 last emphasis mine. The end of this quotation is an example of the possibility that still another meaning of "relative" is involved here. Historically, at least, knowledge as relative has referred to the fact that it is not absolute, that our knowledge does not exhaust all there is to be known. This may or may not be associated with the concept that our knowledge is of relations. But of course, after Murphy's own use of the terms, he probably means here by knowledge as "a relative affair" a reference to one or the other of the two meanings of "relativism" I have distinguished: "relatedness" and "context." But Murphy does refer to the more traditional meaning of knowledge as relative when he says "Our ideas are never all there is of the fact . . ." Ibid, p.138.

64

"subject" or mind. And Murphy at times agrees with this inclusion. But he has also made events basic and pervasive in the objective world. To the extent that he agrees to an inclusion of "subject" in events, he will then be generalizing "subject" into a pervasive and basic trait of the world. This may be a mis-reading of Whitehead by Murphy, plus an illicit identification of this notion of event with Dewey's "context." On the other hand, Murphy may not have been mis-reading Whitehead, but he may have been confusing Dewey with Whitehead.

One answer lies in Whitehead's interpretation of "event." In Science And The Modern World he says an event has a unity of its own, free of any "cognitive mentality" as the "necessary substratum of the unity of experience." There may or may not be cognition then with this unity.¹⁴ To this extent, Whitehead appears to have not included "subject" in events. Earlier he said "event" could be substituted for "prehension," meaning "the thing prehended."¹⁵ And prehension itself could or could not be accompanied by cognition. Prehension means "uncognitive apprehension," by which he means apprehension "which may or may not be cognitive."¹⁶

But in elaborating on the nature of an event, Whitehead spoke of it having "contemporaries," and a "past" or "memories which are fused into its own content," and a "future" and thus "anticipation."¹⁷ Taken in their usual sense, such traits would easily lead one to assume an event includes an element of "subject" or mind.

Whatever Whitehead's interpretation may be, there is good reason to believe that Murphy alternated between thinking of "subject" present in an event, and as not present. Thus he says meanings may belong to events with-

14. A. N. Whitehead, Science And The Modern World (New York, 1925), Mentor ed., p.93.

15. Ibid, p.74.

16. Ibid, p.70.

17. Ibid, p.74.

out reference to mind. Yet he is willing to identify "event" and "perspective" with Dewey's "context," which, as we will see, Murphy himself comes to recognize as including mind.

Murphy uses this identification of Dewey's "context" as a basis for a charge against Dewey of anthropomorphism and, later, animism. Murphy felt that both Dewey and Whitehead had not freed themselves "from the flesh-pots of bifurcation in a full and unambiguous way;" especially Dewey:

While recognizing the relativity of meaning to a context, he has persistently made it relative to a human context, hence taking one class of objects, namely, those which function in human use and activity directly, as primarily and ultimately important. That all objects occur as meanings in the interaction of events is true enough. That the interaction must be social and relative to human use is another matter.¹⁸

An indication of something else at work in Murphy's thinking is in his complaint that Dewey is not content to treat scientific objects as relative to a natural (physical?) context; they must be relative to human contexts as tools. "And this seems not true and certainly not consistent with the theory in question." Events interact in other contexts than the human, he goes on; like electrons. When this context is restricted to the human, a privileged context is set up. Murphy is ready to admit that only humans perhaps use meanings. But Dewey tends, he thinks, to reduce meanings to the human context.¹⁹ And Murphy further maintains that this "anthropomorphic bias" of Dewey's opens the door to "an inevitable suggestion of 'idealism,'" and if Dewey's naturalism has been suspect, "this plainly is the reason."²⁰

Now it is possible to see what has happened. In identifying Whitehead's "natural relatedness" with Dewey's "context," Murphy has not only failed to

18. Murphy, "Relativism," p.141.

19. Ibid, p.142.

20. Ibid, p.143.

see the true nature of Dewey's emphasis on human contexts, but he also appears to be involved in a confusion of science and philosophy.

Take the latter factor. To be sure, science in its statements makes no reference to a mind or "subject," or anything like a human context. Its contexts are natural and physical. But this is no basis for concluding that a philosophical statement of context must do the same. Dewey's instrumental interpretation of science is a statement of philosophical contextualism or relativism, as distinguished from a scientific statement of it. Although the scientist need not refer to mind or "subject" or the human elements involved, philosophical relativism must. Dewey's instrumental theory of science is the result of taking account of the presence of human beings in science; a presence, I repeat, that science in its conclusions can ignore.

There is a human involvement in science in two ways. First, in interpreting science, its theories, conclusions and method, we are soon confronted with the need to take account of the presence of the scientist as a mind or "subject" studying nature. (Recent developments in physics seem to have pointed up this need.) Philosophical relativism must take this into account in its interpretation or philosophy of science. But more than that, it must come to grips with what might be broadly referred to as the meaning of science for human affairs. Dewey's concern with science, his interpretation of it as instrumental, is a concern with more than the subject-matter of science, and more than just what science says about that subject-matter. It is human beings engaged in science, and especially in the application of science called technology, that concerns him. Because of this Dewey said that applied science may be more truly science than what is conventionally called pure science.

One meaning given to the relativism in objective relativism by critics like Lovejoy was the notion of subjectivity that refers to the dependence of

some qualities or objects upon the occurrence of a "percipient event," or the presence of a perceiving organism. The subjective element was the necessary presence of the percipient organism; the objective element was its absence. But this is little better than traditional secondary qualities. It is true that there is this kind of relativism associated with objective relativism in the literature. Murphy claimed that bringing mind back into nature this way (what he called the "Anti-Copernican Revolution" in science, in revolt against the "Copernican Revolution" that had read mind out of nature) had a tendency to spread indiscriminately over the whole of nature a "bifurcated, arbitrary, and absolute 'human standpoint.'"²¹ What it amounts to is the view that since all events manifest a very definite sort of relativity to their context and conditions, all "must perforce be sentient in some general sense," for such relativity appears in human experience in the form of perspectives and in this special form presupposes "sentience," "apprehension," and the like. This extension of "the special feature of human relativity" to "nominally inanimate nature" is a result of the reaction to the old, dualistic view.²²

Thus "subjective facts" are said to be those "which occur only in relation to a subject of experience" and are also without contradiction objective as features of the natural world. But objective relativism was saying (and Murphy suspected this) that all knowledge is subjective since the "subject of experience" is necessarily and always involved. But Murphy did not see that a new notion of subjective was being set forth; new concepts of the relation between the "subjective facts" and the "subject of experience." Murphy identified this as the "new animism" of the Anti-Copernican Revolution,

21. A. E. Murphy, "The Anti-Copernican Revolution," Journal Of Philosophy, 1929, XXVI, pp.282-83.

22. Ibid, p.285.

in turn identifying it with Dewey. For Murphy it means the illicit generalization of the subjective, cutting it off from its natural conditions and viewed in terms of an unconditioned, hence absolute and contradictory relativity.²³ I submit that it is Murphy who is guilty of the illicit generalization in so far as he fails to observe the two meanings of "relativity" which I have pointed out: referring to the physical relatedness of the world or nature, which may or may not include minds; and referring to the relation of that world or nature, or the object of knowledge, to a mind or "subject." As it turns out, the latter is actually an instance of the former. But it is not an extension to the former. It represents a thoroughgoing development, in fact, of the notion of "the world as related," a kind of development not all philosophers who initially entertained the idea were willing to make.

In a later article Murphy continued to attribute Whitehead's animism to Dewey. But he also seemed to suspect an animism in Whitehead in referring to Whitehead and Eddington as examples of those who had mis-used the analogy of human perspectives as a means of understanding the "physical meaning and status of relativity in all events."²⁴ (Of course, Whitehead himself had also noted how the new Relativity Theory had brought forth certain subjectivistic mis-interpretations from various writers.²⁵)

Murphy later comes to suggest that there is a difference between physical and philosophical relativism. If he does not, then it can only mean that he is saying that whatever we decide physical relativism to be, that is what philosophical relativism is. In which case (a very possible case), he would make the opposite mistake. He rightly forbids equating philosophical

23. Ibid, p.286.

24. Ibid, p.287.

25. Whitehead, Science, pp.120-21.

relativism and scientific or physical relativism. But if this means we have to beware of attributing philosophical concepts to science, it also means we have to beware of attributing scientific concepts to philosophy.

The concept of relativism that means physical relatedness, physical or scientific relativity, objective relations, or the notion that our knowledge is of things in relation (or of the relations between things), I shall refer to as "Relativism 1," or Rel.1. The second notion of relativism referring to human context, presence of mind, "subject," or the human being, perspective, and subjective--these I will group under the term "Relativism 2," or Rel.2. Dewey admirably stated what I mean by Rel.2:

That an individual, possessed by some mode and degree of organized unity, participates in the genesis of every experienced situation, whether it be an object or an activity, is evident. That the way in which it is engaged affects the quality of the situation experienced is evident. That the way in which it is engaged has consequences that modify not merely the environment but which react to modify the active agent; that every form of life in the higher organisms constantly conserves some consequences of its prior experiences, is also evident. The constancy and pervasiveness of the operative presence of the self as a determining factor in all situations is the chief reason why we give so little heed to it . . . Only in pathological cases, in delusions and insanities and social eccentricities, do we readily become aware of it . . . Yet till we understand operations of the self as the tool of tools, the means in all use of means . . . science is incomplete and the use made of it is at the mercy of an unknown factor . . .²⁶

Woodbridge refers to the same thing when he says the organism is able

to preserve, in spite of changing stimulation and environment, an individual stability. It thereby conserves its own past and draws upon it in its own reactions. It has, consequently, a peculiar efficacy of its own which is not to be explained solely in terms of the stimuli affecting it, and which presents those features of spontaneity and initiative so characteristic of conscious beings . . .²⁷

And from these statements we can also see the suggestion of how Rel.2 is an instance of a general, pervasive (cosmic) relativity of nature or the

26. Dewey, Nature, pp.246-47.

27. Woodbridge, Nature, p.371.

world which would be the relativism of Rel.1.

In making this distinction I repeat that I make it in order to clarify the references to "relativism" that appear in the literature. The clarification is required in order to point out those instances in which the writer is dealing with the objective-relativist problem of synthesizing objectivity and subjectivity or relativity. An adequate world-view or metaphysics would include both relativisms. Thus both are found in objective relativism, but it is the latter (Rel.2) that is the focal point for its unique contribution.²⁸

A great deal of talk about relativism actually refers to Rel.1. We only have a true objective-relativist position when it is extended to include some kind of Rel.2. In some cases this is, in fact, the cutting weapon for identifying objective relativists, although the literature almost universally identifies an objective relativist as anyone who may deal to some extent with problems of Relativity Theory, or one who deals in any way with context or perspective, or even one who is concerned with the objectivity of relations.

Murphy contributed to the identification of objective relativism with a concern for the objectivity of relations. In a paper published about the time of the baptismal paper he noted that "Perhaps the first plank in our third party platform must be the reality of relations."²⁹ And then he went on to what I would term the second plank; i.e., an explicit statement of Rel.2 derived from Rel.1:

The knowledge relation is a fact of interaction within the complex of events, it does not shut us away from facts, it shuts us in with them.

28. We have already encountered the third meaning of "relative" referring to our knowledge as incomplete or fallible. This can be termed Rel.3 and it bears little significance to my paper except that it may occur in the literature and should be differentiated from the other two, more important, meanings.

29. A. E. Murphy, "Ideas And Nature," University of California Publications In Philosophy (Berkeley, 1926), VIII, pp.212-13.

Its very relativity is the proof of our relatedness--an obvious but often unrecognized fact . . . If we are part of nature and a real part, as naturalism contends, then we belong to it and our ideas have their locus there . . . We are in a great arena, with many actors, but our part belongs there no less than the rest, and perhaps, in the end, it is not a small one.³⁰

Murphy repeated this relativism later, but he also repeated the ambiguity.

In a series on Alexander he pointed out how Alexander had established the objective relatedness of the world with knowledge as a specific case of such relatedness. This was a major contribution, Murphy thinks, because knowledge had been an anomaly when seen to be itself quite clearly relative and yet in a world of absolutes. Knowledge is relative, yet we ought to know objects in themselves. "Either its relativity or its objective validity must apparently be surrendered."³¹ "Knowledge is relative" must refer to the relativity that traditionally has been held to be incompatible with objectivity. I again submit that this can only mean relativism in the crucial sense I have designated as Rel.2.

Here I must note, however, a definite tradition in philosophy that has claimed a distinct incompatibility to exist between being objective and being related. There was a recognition among some early American philosophers that it was therefore necessary to demonstrate how the world, or objects of knowledge, could be said to be both objective and related. It was certainly influenced by the abandonment in scientific thinking of the discrete particles and "simple location" of classical physics. This was once expressed in terms of modern physics by Einstein and Infeld:

. . . it is not the charges nor the particles but the field in the space between the charges and the particles which is essential for

30. Ibid, p.213.

31. A. E. Murphy, "Alexander's Metaphysic Of Space-Time," The Monist, 1928, XXXVIII, p.22.

the description of physical phenomena.³²

Dewey has shown how the atomistic presuppositions of traditional empiricism required the adoption of a synthetic activity of thought.³³ And it was not until James that this was openly and successfully challenged by denying that "the empirically given consists of disconnected elements."³⁴ This is expressed by James in numerous places (Dewey refers to the Psychology); the best known is in his statement of Radical Empiricism, which is radical because it admits into its construction no element that is not directly experienced, nor excludes any directly experienced element.

For such a philosophy, the relations that connect experiences must themselves be experienced relations, and any kind of relation experienced must be accounted as 'real' as anything else in the system.³⁵

And this was somewhat elaborated later by James:

therefore the parts of experience hold together from next to next by relations that are themselves parts of experience. The directly apprehended universe needs, in short, no extraneous trans-empirical connective support, but possesses in its own right a concatenated or continuous structure.³⁶

In this connection, Dewey's reply to certain of Hans Reichenbach's criticisms is interesting. Reichenbach had claimed that Dewey maintained a doctrine of the non-reality of scientific objects because Dewey identified the scientific object with relations instead of some kind of existing non-relational things. Dewey replied that Reichenbach was still in the toils of traditional atomistic, pre-Jamesean empiricism; i.e., for him

32. Albert Einstein & Leopold Infeld, The Evolution Of Physics (New York, 1938), p.259.

33. John Dewey, Logic: The Theory Of Inquiry (New York, 1938), p.517.

34. Ibid, p.518 note.

35. James, Empiricism, p.42.

36. James, Truth, pp. xii-xiii.

relations were not real.³⁷

Professor Schneider has singled out Francis Ellingwood Abbot's
Scientific Theism as

a major contribution to American philosophical realism. On the basis of a careful critique of Kant's exploitation of the distinction between phenomena and noumena, Abbot made an excellent exposition of objective relativism. He seems to have antedated Charles S. Peirce in repudiating modern nominalism and in defending a realism not based on Scottish intuitionism, but on an independent analysis of the objectivity of relations.³⁸

Abbot, somewhat earlier than James, had not only established an objective reality of relations, but also had made relations a part of experience--albeit his "Perceptive Understanding" (a faculty of "pure and immediate cognition of relations") had its own problems.³⁹

In a sense then, there could be two objective relativisms, two "moments" of objective relativism corresponding to the two meanings of "relativism." One points to the development of the objective reality of relations, making relations as real as any other aspect of experience. This (Jamesian) Radical Empiricism would be accomplished by an identification of knowledge with the relations of things, or things-in-relation, instead of discrete "things-in-themselves." I have called this Rel.1. But there is the second "moment" of objective relativism. It is the more crucial sense of relativism I have called Rel.2, which is an instance of Rel.1, and refers more particularly to the knowledge relation between "subject" and "object." I have shown that both of these are found in Murphy's writings, and I have

37. John Dewey, "Experience, Knowledge And Value: A Rejoinder," in Schilpp ed., Dewey, p.535.

38. Herbert W. Schneider, A History Of American Philosophy (New York, 1946) p.326 my emphasis.

39. Francis Ellingwood Abbot, Scientific Theism (Boston, 1885), p. ix; also pp.134-35.

further suggested that any statement of Rel.2 has implied in it a Rel.1.

If the world is made up of an interrelatedness, and knowledge is an instance of it, then any statement of the "subject-object" integration that has these assumptions behind it must necessarily come to some statement of Rel.2. And out of this will come an objective relativism.

Woodbridge once pointed to the distinction I am making here when he said that in seeing we have a process not set up exclusively in the organism, "but an interaction or relation between the organism and its surroundings effected by means of the eye. It is not a reaction solely, but an interaction as well."⁴⁰ At this point he refers the reader to Dewey's paper on the "reflex arc" concept, a paper in which Dewey showed that the arc is actually a circuit; and that the stimulus-response distinction is not the traditional metaphysical distinction of outer-inner, reality-organism, objectivity-subjectivity, but an entirely functional distinction we make within the context of a unified circuit of behavior or experience. "Reality" and "stimulus" do not refer to the same thing--at least not in their usual meaning of "the world out there." This emendation by Dewey is one, I might add, that has not always been recognized among psychologists, nor has the paper received the attention it should have in any exegesis of Dewey's philosophy. Its relation to objective relativism seems quite evident.

Murphy appears to have recognized that the two kinds of relativism I have called Rel.1 and Rel.2 are so connected that a statement of one implies a statement of the other. This seems to be the import at least of Murphy's statement that Alexander's great service was in showing us that relatedness is

the basic fact about reality . . . For knowledge is compresence, in-

40. Woodbridge, *Nature*, p.368 my emphasis.

interaction, and in such interaction mind is together with things from its own standpoint. Hence no mere registration of an external environment is to be expected, much less the fabrication of a new one.⁴¹

At one point Murphy does in fact acknowledge that there are two relativisms, and that they are connected as well. He notes that in Alexander's spatio-temporal world it would be impossible for shape not to vary with different standpoints. Although Murphy does not say what he means by "standpoint"--whether, for example, he is referring to the standpoint of the scientific relativist, or that of the philosophical relativist--he does say that relativity

is a function of such relatedness. Such selectiveness is a function of compresence on any level and thoroughly to be expected here. You do not get at the reality by subtracting such differences; without them the thing would have lost its temporal reality.⁴²

It is the difference between a two-term and a three-term relation, Murphy says. And on the latter, relativistic view, even illusion is not error.

A further relation is introduced and we have to deal with the peculiarities of individual minds. But once more, in that context the given object is real, it is a fact about the world in its relation to a given mind and follows from the connections of that mind with the world.⁴³

Murphy now has made mind more central to his relativism. In fact, at one point he criticized Alexander for never allowing mind to make a difference in his treatment of the relativity of knowledge. The knowledge relation is for Alexander one of "mere contemplation."⁴⁴ In fact, the ultimate difficulty in Alexander's treatment of relativism is

41. Murphy, "Space-Time," p.22. 42. Ibid, p.23.

43. Ibid, pp.23-4 first emphasis mine.

44. Ibid, p.27; also p.32,37.

[that] compresence has ceased to mean interaction, relativity, and has come to mean simple occupation . . . The occupation makes no difference to the appearances which are considered 'in themselves' and apart from such reference. Mind is merely 'together' with things in an external fashion and such 'compresence' is taken to be the essence of knowledge . . . [and] mind introduces new complexities which tend to shut it off from the absolute constitution of things . . .

If knowing be mere togetherness, then knowing adds nothing at all to the pre-existing reality which is simply alongside it.⁴⁵

A few years later Murphy had occasion to defend objective relativism from Lovejoy's attacks. Lovejoy's argument, as Murphy saw it, was that objective relativism allows the object to be made up of all its appearances. On the contrary, Murphy held, objective relativism "does not hold everything is what it appears to be, but rather that the data of experience are not primarily 'appearances' at all."⁴⁶

Murphy did not deal here with the relativism in objective relativism, but he did speak of its concept of objectivity which maintains that "the data of direct experience themselves, and not merely preferentially objective objects, can be judged about on their merits and as facts, not as appearances."⁴⁷

There were other statements of objective relativism by Murphy. Again in reply to Lovejoy, he identified it as a view which recognized the distinctness of the plurality of types of objects within a single world of interacting events,

45. Ibid, pp.36-7.

46. Murphy, "Lovejoy's," p.35. He also notes that Lovejoy and others have a pre-conception of what the object of knowledge is upon which they base their criticisms of objective relativism as well as their own theories of knowledge. pp.35-6.

47. Ibid, p.37.

each quite real and ultimate in its own kind, which grounded our knowledge of them in the occurrent reality of the perceptual situation itself and which discovered in the effective relatedness of objects a valid clue to their objective nature.⁴⁸

Murphy also indicated that objective relativism includes Rel.2 in his article for the Schilpp volume on Dewey. There he says "Objective Relativism" was used in "academic discussion" in order to stress

the fact that the experienced world is at once in some of its major features dependent on and conditioned by the special relations in which sentient (and more particularly human) organisms stand to their environment and also a direct presentation of that environment itself, or the order of natural events, as it is under such conditions.⁴⁹

But for Murphy, as for others, this radical empiricism meant that we are so "trapped" within experience that it is necessary to say that we not only know the world as it is experienced, but also know it as it is not experienced:

But it is essential to acknowledge that we know both what the world is like under the conditions of observation and enjoyment and also what, in a much more general and approximate way, the unexperienced environment is by which experience is conditioned.⁵⁰

Murphy has now taken up Lovejoy's argument: First, that the part of the experienced world "dependent on and conditioned by" the sentient organism is somehow not the world; and second, that the radical-empiricist proposition that "the world is as it is experienced" means that to "know what the world is like under the conditions of observation and enjoyment" is for some reason not to know the world. The interjection of experience is looked upon as a screen or even as an obstacle between "subject" and "object." Dewey's

48. Ibid, p.71.

49. A. E. Murphy, "Dewey's Epistemology And Metaphysics," in Schilpp ed., Dewey, p.219.

50. Ibid, p.224.

reply to Murphy--what he had said before--undercuts this notion: When "an experience" is spoken of, "a thing experienced" is also meant.⁵¹

In short, Murphy took a fact about the world or nature--its perspectivity--and made this an exclusive element of the experiencing organism which, at some times at least, he thinks it is desirable to avoid or eliminate. His demand for a statement of the world as unexperienced is actually a demand for a different world, a world in which this perspectival aspect would not be present. It is in many ways a demand for an absolute.

At one time Murphy gave the impression that objective relativism may have been more of a lexicographical phenomenon than anything else. American philosophizing, he noted, had been conducted for many years on the basis of individual positions being used to stand on for an indefinitely extended debate in which no one was able (or willing) to discover agreements (instead of disagreements) with others. "If one did not like the traditional 'isms,' there was always a possible new one, 'objective relativism,' for example, to enliven the discussion."⁵² Perhaps it is only recently that it has been possible to see that while this may explain why Murphy called it "Objective Relativism," in so doing he coined a happy phrase in thus indicating to some extent the nature of this particular "subject-object" integration; an integration, by the way, that would provide just what Murphy called for: a basis for the enunciation of an inclusive, instead of exclusive, philosophy.

2. THE METAPHYSICS OF OBJECTIVE RELATIVISM

It is clear that the objective-relativist critique of traditional notions of the object and nature of knowledge is derived from new theories

51. Dewey, "Rejoinder," in Ibid, p.601.

52. A. E. Murphy, "The Fruits Of Critical Realism," Journal Of Philosophy, 1937, XXXIV, pp.291-92.

of mind, experience, and nature; from a new cosmology or metaphysics. For example, the traditional inner-outer distinction of subjective and objective was directly challenged:

Philosophers, and strangely enough philosophers who call themselves realists, have constantly held that the traits which are characteristic of thinking, namely, uncertainty, ambiguity, alternatives, inquiring, search, selection, experimental reshaping of external conditions, do not possess the same existential character as do the objects of valid knowledge. They have denied that these traits are evidential of the character of the world within which thinking occurs . . . that such things are only personal or psychological in contrast with a world of objective nature . . . /But "naturalistic metaphysics" maintains that/ The world must actually be such as to generate ignorance and inquiry; doubt and hypothesis, trial and temporal conclusions. 53

The objective-relativist theory of "thought as a condition of science" was actually a theory about nature, involving the attribution to nature of three defining characteristics:

In the first place, it is implied that some natural events are endings whether enjoyed or obnoxious, which occur, apart from reflective choice and art, only casually, without control. In the second place, it implies that events, being events and not rigid and lumpy substances, are ongoing and hence as such unfinished, incomplete, indeterminate. Consequently they possess a possibility of being so managed and steered that ends may become fulfilments not just termini, conclusions not just closings . . . In the third place, regulation of ongoing and incomplete processes in behalf of selected consequences, implies that there are orders of sequence and coexistence involved; these orders or relations when ascertained are intellectual means which enable us to use events as concrete means of directing the course of affairs to forecast conclusions. 54

Murphy was aware of this new cosmology when he identified the objective-relativist position with an inversion of the positions and roles of object and event (although the description may be truer of Whitehead than of Dewey). What I have called Rel.1 could generally be identified with this new theory

53. Dewey, Nature, p.69.

54. Ibid, p.159.

of nature. "Nature" would agree with Professor Lamprecht's definition: "the entire body of events, where and when and as they occur, whatever their quality or kind or type." "Physical order" would be reserved for that part of the world which is the subject-matter of science.⁵⁵ What gave rise to the need for the distinction I have made was that relativity was too often used in reference to physical order alone. Or, if not that, it was never clear as to whether "relativity" referred to physical order or to nature. The difference is the inclusion of mind in the latter, which means the difference between scientific and philosophical relativism.⁵⁶

With the achievement of the objective reality of relations by Radical Empiricism, the traditional empiricist and 17th century dualist notion that relations (and the qualities dependent on them) are apart from nature as products of an isolated mind was replaced by a non-bifurcated world of interrelated events "whose mutual influence determines their character."⁵⁷ It was the medieval concept of "substance" that tended to obscure the role of relations. Furthermore, the unwillingness, or inability, to make a thoroughgoing statement of the nature and role of relations in the world, even among those who were critical of medieval substance, tended to support the notion of a fixed, static world. Lamprecht said it was the result of the attempt to point out the significance of Darwin for philosophy that produced a theory of nature as evolving rather than ready-made. With the objective relativists thus committed to the view that things can have different natures because they can be in different relations with things, and

55. Sterling P. Lamprecht, "Sense Qualities And Material Things," Philosophical Review, 1929, XXXVIII, p.24.

56. The same undoubtedly can be said for what I have called Rel.3: the non-absolutistic, incomplete, fallible nature of our knowledge. Here again it seems Rel.3 is unavoidable in statements of Rel.1. All of which is just another way of saying that epistemological statements are derivable from--because implied in--cosmological or metaphysical statements.

57. Lamprecht, "Sense," p.26.

that this possibility of different relations was an aspect of an ever-evolving plurality of worlds and processes, it is to be expected that those who clung to a medieval substance would criticize them for disobeying the "law" of contradiction.

Perhaps the criticism of objective relativism most often heard was of its notion that a thing could have a multiplicity of qualities--not to mention the notion that some of those qualities were contradictory. The relativist was generally identified as one who embraced the possibility of a thing having a multitude of qualities or properties, even though they may be contradictory. And the objective relativist was often identified as such. The term "relativist" or "relativism" referred to this a good part of the time. Thus Marhenke noted at one point that where heretofore most philosophers found it impossible to reconcile the perceived ellipticity of the penny with its circularity, "Relativism is the dissolution of this impossibility."⁵⁸

Lamprecht described the objective-relativist metaphysics of the Darwinian concept of reality as

a complex of more or less correlated processes, a constant becoming of many sorts of things, a going-on-ness in the course of which there appeared frequent novelties and unexpected eventuations as well as ordered uniformities and predictable repetitions . . . [it recognized] no single type of event as a norm . . . It was a metaphysics according to which the diverse qualities which nature manifests are relevant to and relative to the existing correlations and integrations which are ever passing away to be succeeded by new [ones] . . . with their respective qualities.⁵⁹

The "substance view" was rejected by objective relativism in favor of the concept of the event as the "ultimate unit. of reality."

58. Marhenke, "Error," p.174.

59. Lamprecht, "Sense," pp.32-3.

Murphy demonstrated the objective-relativist rejection in his distinction between "substance" and "substantive." As "absolute" distinguishes the concept of "substance," so "relative" distinguishes the concept of "substantive."

On the level of common sense and empirical observation, a substantive is a "that" of which characters are predicated, but which is not itself predicated of anything further . . . it is that which has qualities and stands in relation, without itself being either a quality or a relation. It neither exists nor is conceived through itself, for such isolation leaves out the relational context in which it occurs and the characters through which it is conceived . . .⁶⁰

An event is an "admirable substantive" in that it is "precisely that which has qualities and stands in relations but is itself neither a quality nor a relation."⁶¹ An adjective is a character of an event, and is relational. Its occurrence is a function "of the complete interaction of events." It is never possible to simply predicate objects of events, to treat occurrence as a two-term affair.⁶²

The charge that this means contradiction comes from a failure to see that

An occurrence is red in one relation, blue in another. The same event is here and there, now and then, and naturally so. The fact is not comprehensible apart from its relations, and there is no reason why it should be. For relatedness is of the very essence of a world of events, of interaction.⁶³

As we have seen, Murphy viewed the knowledge relation as "a fact of interaction within the complex of events."⁶⁴ And if it is an instance of interaction, and interaction involves a mutual influence determining the character of the interrelated events, then the Rel.2 of objective relativism is an in-

60. A. E. Murphy, "Substance And Substantive," University Of California Publications In Philosophy (Berkeley, 1927), IX, p.66.

61. Ibid, p.81.

62. Ibid, p.82.

63. Ibid, p.83.

64. Murphy, "Ideas," p.213.

stance of the general interrelatedness of things, or Rel.1. And because of the mutual influence determining the character of the things involved, Rel.2 is a statement of the "subject-object" integration in knowledge which I have identified with objective relativism.

But here again we have the problem encountered in Murphy's concept of an event. It is clear that Murphy includes the presence and functioning of mind in an event. But it is not clear how far this inclusion goes. In integrating or synthesizing mind and nature (or "subject" and "object") in his theory of events, he does not appear to maintain a distinction between them.

Such a distinction would enable us to differentiate between event and process. It would parallel the distinction between Rel.1 and Rel.2. It would be the difference between just a physical world and a physical plus a non-physical world. Such a difference would in turn rest upon the distinction between the physical realm and the mental realm, taking the form perhaps of Wilmon Sheldon's distinction in Process And Polarity. There he viewed the distinction in terms of the joining by mind of the past and the future with the present, whereas the physical present has no connection with the future, and is only partly determined by the past.⁶⁵ In these terms, Whitehead's attribution of a past and a future to an event is clearly the introduction of mind. But it might be better to reserve "event" for the physical order, and "process" for the mental (with the physical always included, of course), paralleling the Rel.1-Rel.2 distinction.

In "Postulate 2" of his Perspective Realism, E. B. McGilvary embodied a statement of the relatedness of the world. Note, however, that though it is stated in terms of context, there is no explicit indication that the context-

65. Wilmon Henry Sheldon, Process And Polarity (New York, 1944), pp.92 ff.

ualism meant for him the more crucial sense of relativism that I have identified as Rel.2:

Postulate 2. Every particular in the world is a member of a context of particulars and is what it is only because of its context; and every character any member has it has only by virtue of its relations to other members of that context.⁶⁶

This is a good example of the writings on context in the literature that fail to indicate whether or not mind is included.

Expanding on this postulate, however, McGilvary does appear to (tacitly or otherwise) bring in mind or "subject" in his reference to things being "found in contexts," or things standing in certain distances and directions "to us":

Not only are particulars in general found in contexts . . . but it is a familiar fact that many of their empirical characters vary with the varying relations in which they are found. The tables and chairs and trees and mountains we see have different seen shapes and sizes according to the distances and directions in which they stand to us.⁶⁷

Although the references are limited here to the physical relations of distance and direction, McGilvary seems to be suggesting two meanings of "relativism." The fact that he conceived of seeing as something more than just physical, is our clue that these two meanings are, in fact, involved here.

McGilvary had a quarrel with Dewey over the extent of the relatedness each was going to give to his view of the world. McGilvary denied that there is any such thing as an entity entirely self-sufficient in the sense of being entirely independent of any relation to anything else. Dewey had said that there was in every event something "self-sufficient, wholly immediate, neither a relation or an element in a relational whole, but terminal and

66. McGilvary, Realism, I, p.18.

67. Ibid, I, p.19.

exclusive."⁶⁸ Both materialist and idealist agree in a metaphysics, Dewey said, that ignores,

in behalf of relations and relational systems, those irreducible, infinitely plural undefinable and indescribable qualities which a thing must have in order to be, and in order to be capable of becoming the subject of relations and a theme of discourse. Immediacy of existence is ineffable.⁶⁹

McGilvary's objection was that this is a belief that some things have "absolute, i.e., non-relational characters." And he chided Dewey for being joined to this "idol of the market" like so many others who Dewey had often criticized for the very same "absolutism." McGilvary described the origin of the tendency to predicate intrinsic qualities or properties to things (certainly not what Dewey was doing here) as the result of common agreement and usage, and in a certain element of soundness in our habitual ways of saying "The rose is red," "things are their characters." But this lacked for the perspectivist the "recognition of the relativity of all the characters of things; and this lack was itself due to a natural and healthy reliance of early man on the consensus of his fellows."⁷⁰

The relativizing of scientific conclusions in favor of variations from system of measurement to system of measurement, with transformation formulae available to make it possible to pass with assurance from one to the other system, actually brought forth a demand for an absolute. Some argued that the variation from system to system meant an absence of objectivity. Space by itself and time by itself were thought of as "shadows," and only some sort of a union of the two could be regarded as "physically objective, and therefore as absolute."⁷¹ Einstein agreed, McGilvary noted, that

68. Ibid, I, p.20.

69. Dewey, Nature, p.85, quoted Ibid, I, P.20.

70. Ibid, I, p.23.

71. Ibid, I, pp.24-5.

the laws of physics must be so fashioned as to be valid with respect to whatever reference frames are in relative motion.⁷²

Such a requirement was called the "requirement of universal covariance which deprives space and time of the last vestige of physical objectivity."⁷³

Thus the relative, what varies from person to person, loses physical objectivity, an outcome not unexpected of an absolute. And McGilvary is eminently correct in wondering how physical objectivity can be achieved in a union of terms neither of which has the least physical objectivity.⁷⁴

McGilvary's form of Rel.1--his Postulate 2.--thus assumes

a universal objective relativity that does not preclude the objectivity of specific relatives. Everything is in the same boat, and the boat in which all things are is constituted of the interrelated things that are in it.⁷⁵

And McGilvary stated what the perspectivist means by "self-sufficient" or "independent":

... space and time are relations, and for him relations are not independent of their terms, nor are the terms independent of the relations in which they stand. It takes relations and terms, or rather terms-in-relations, to constitute anything of which any sort of independence can be asserted, and even any relational complex is independent only in a limited sense, since it, too, is in relation to other relational complexes.⁷⁶

McGilvary cautioned against taking his postulate to mean that the characters which any particular has by virtue of the relations in which it stands are to be identified with the relations. Everything is a term in relation:

72. Albert Einstein, "Die Grundlage der allgemeinen Relativitätstheorie," reprinted in Relativitätsprinzip, p.83, quoted Ibid, I, p.25.

73. Ibid, I, p.25.

74. Ibid, I, p.26.

75. Ibid, I, p.28.

76. Ibid, I, p.28 note.

Their 'immediacy of existence' consists in what they are in the relations in which they occur, not in the mere fact that they occur in those relations, or in the fact that they occur as 'elements of a relational whole.'⁷⁷

The way is now clear for McGilvary's Postulate 3:

In the world of nature any 'thing' at any time is, and is nothing but, the totality of the relational characters, experienced or not experienced, that the 'thing' has at that time in whatever relations it has at that time to other 'things.'⁷⁸

And by "thing" he means to exclude sense-qualities and elementary relations.

By "thing" is "here meant what the man in the street means by 'thing'. . ."⁷⁹

A thing has characters in the sense a family "has" members: it consists of its members. A family does not need some kind of "family-substance," that is, "a something different from its constitution and underlying it on which it can stand."⁸⁰ The family is the "members standing together in certain ways." McGilvary would prefer to refer to it as a "college," as in a "college of cardinals"; to speak of a thing being "a college of its characters, or properties or attributes."⁸¹ And this is directly opposite to the popular misunderstanding of the "being" or "ousia" of something:

being-a-characterizing-item-of-a-more-complex-whole, is, by ignoring its relevance to that complex, interpreted as being-an-underlying-support . . . of the complex whole.⁸²

But McGilvary is willing to grant a legitimate use for "substance" to refer to the "longer-lived characters":

. . . let us say that 'substance' as we shall use the term consists of a college of dynamic ["continuant"] characters seated in a con-

77. Ibid, I, p.31.

78. Ibid, I, p.32.

79. Ibid, I, p.33.

80. Ibid, I, p.34.

81. Ibid, I, pp.34-5.

82. Ibid, I, p.35.

sistory--a place of assembly--and that a 'thing' at any time is such a 'substance' together with such non-dynamic "transient" characters, if any, as are at that time conditioned by dynamic acts then and there taking place.⁸³

Thus the red book lying on the table as a substance is "what is now dynamically occurring where I see the book; it is a set of dynamical characters in dynamical relations."⁸⁴ As a thing it is all this

together with the non-dynamical character, red. Thus when seen as red, the book as a 'thing' is red, whereas, qua 'substance,' it is not red--it has no color at all . . . Moreover, when not perceived or thought of at all by anyone, the book as a 'substance' and the book as a 'thing' are then identical; i.e., neither has a character which the other has not.⁸⁵

And McGilvary sets forth his view of nature, his Radical Empiricism--his cosmology:

. . . the world in which we experience ourselves to be living: that world with all the characters which at any time it is directly experienced at that time to have, and also with those characters which, though not directly experienced, competent scientific investigations have revealed that it has; furthermore with characters not yet revealed and also, let us assume, with characters that may never be revealed to us because of our limitation. Nature, whatever else it is at any time, is always a world of physical things dynamically acting on one another; i.e., the world which the physicist investigates by his own methods.⁸⁶

But thus far, McGilvary has only flirted with the relativism I have singled out as Rel.2 and the kind, as true philosophical relativism, that is found (along with Rel.1) in objective relativism. McGilvary's attitude as a perspectivist, he said, is relativistic, or contextualistic. Four of his "masters of relativism" were Hegel, Einstein, Whitehead and Smuts. And relativism for him "must perforce emphasize relations."⁸⁷

83. Ibid, I, p.36.

84. Ibid, I, p.36.

85. Ibid, I, pp.36-7.

86. Ibid, I, p.37.

87. Ibid, I, p.39.

Donald Oliver's discussion of the "logic of perspective realism" suggests the kind of relativism crucial to objective relativism; i.e., Rel.2. Here he deals with the occurrence of a secondary quality like the sweetness of an apple:

whatever qualities are experienced are just what appear to be and where they appear to be for the being experiencing them under the specific conditions in which the experience occurs.⁸⁸

In symbolic terms: Where naive realism says "aRb," perspective realism says "aR_cb," where "c" is the conditions under which the predication or relation holds. He then makes a statement which represents a summary of the two relativisms, Rel.1 and Rel.2. For perspective realism, "to be, is to be in an environment," and any assertion of existence gains meaning only when the conditions of existence have been specified.⁸⁹ What should be noted here is that in calling attention to these conditions he has not necessarily committed himself to any particular kind of conditions. For example, he does not maintain the view that because of some conditions, some kinds of qualities or properties are substantially different from others. There is, in short, the suggestion of new meanings for "subjective" and "objective."

Oliver's statement is reminiscent of Lovejoy's. The objective is that which displays independence of any mind or organism. But for Lovejoy and the critical realists, such a condition was a condition of the reality of a thing; i.e., "the objective" and "the real" were identified. But for Oliver's perspective realism, the conditions are those of occurrence:
 "Only the real can condition the real, and the real can be real only as it

88. Oliver, "The Logic," p.198.

89. Ibid, p.199 note.

is conditioned."⁹⁰ And both conditioned and the conditions are real, illusion arising only when conditions are overlooked or left out.

Thus "objective" takes on meaning only when we describe the proper sentient apparatus to which qualities observed in a thing will be revealed.

To locate a quality outside of the experience in which it appears is to render it objective and a permanent possibility of recurrence in a field of consciousness, but merely to say that whatever appears in any consciousness is objective is not to locate that quality at all.⁹¹

The proof that a thing is objective must include a description of the means by which we are to come upon it when we wish to do so. And for a perspective realist this is an integral part of the proposition that predicates a property of a thing.⁹²

This would be different from a naive view of the unconditioned existence of qualities. Such a view would insist that the grass was, is, and would be green entirely apart from any and all references to a sentient organism. The objective relativist would maintain that to predicate such qualities one must state the various conditions under which they appear. Even though the presence of a perceiving organism may be among these conditions, this does not mean these qualities are to be subjectivized. The presence of the perceiving organism or individual does not condition the reality but the occurrence of these qualities. However, in all of their insistence that such relativistic conditions be included in propositions that predicate any kind of properties of a thing, the objective relativists maintained the direct theory of naive or neo-realism. That is, they all uniformly maintained that such qualities are a part of the world. But they did not all agree in placing qualities in the object, even though conditioned by the

90. Ibid, p.208, romanized.

91. Ibid, pp.206-7.

92. Ibid, p.207.

perceptions of a "subject."

Thus Dewey abjures any notion that qualities are miraculously ejected or projected from the organism into external things even though language "objectifies" them in discriminating and identifying them as immediate traits of things. Nor is this an illusory attribution of psychical entities to physical things:

The qualities never were 'in' the organism; they always were qualities of interactions in which both extra-organic things and organisms partake. When named, they enable identification and discrimination of things to take place as means in a further course of inclusive interaction. Hence they are as much qualities of the things engaged as of the organism.⁹³

Where Oliver distinguished between conditions of the reality and of the occurrence of properties, Dewey took a similar approach by pointing out that the "sense" in sense-perceiving, like the "brush" in brush-painting and the "hammer" in hammer-pounding, tells nothing about the nature of perceiving, but conveys information about the means by which the act of perceiving occurs.⁹⁴ "Sense" as prefixed to qualities designates an important condition of their occurrence and not a constituent of their nature:

In short, perception does not affect or infect the nature of the qualities perceived, although sense-organs and their structural connections, which are the means of perceiving, do affect the properties of a thing produced.⁹⁵

And the objective relativist would also say that the same applies to the conditioning action of subjectivity or relativity; it is a condition of occurrence but not reality. Differences in variously perceived objects are

93. Dewey, Nature, p.259.

94. John Dewey, "The Naturalistic Theory Of Perception By The Senses," Journal Of Philosophy, 1925, XXII, p.596.

95. Ibid, p.597.

in one factual subject-matter, 'sense-presentation' having for its subject-matter a thing in some present space-relation, memory presentation that thing in a specified past temporal relation.⁹⁶

This is Dewey's "Naturalistic Theory of Perception," and is compared with the "Epistemological" theory in which distinctions of "sense," like distinctions of "conceptual" versus "sense," create problems because the objects of the various modes of presentation are made different in kind. The objective relativist views all objects (and their properties) as facts in one and the same world. Other theories must decide between the "real" and "unreal."

But what about the location of these qualities? Are they in the object as naive perception tells us? Dewey said that this question is always a clincher for the arguments for the psychic character of sense qualities. The difficulty, however, is in the failure to analyze the conception of "where." Where is an explosion, or an echo? he asked. Whenever there is an event, there is interaction and a field. No field can be precisely delimited, extending wherever the energies of the interaction operate and as far as any energy redistributions are affected. It can be limited practically, but not existentially located to any precise degree. The bent rays of light in the bent-stick case are literally an interaction field which is not "in" the organism nor "at" a highly delimited spot in the environment. One focus would be the stick in and out of water, another would be where the light impinges on the seeing organism. But these are determinations in a wider field.⁹⁷ As a matter of fact, we locate things like explosions at a point of control for further prevention. A disease is at that place where remedial measures most effectively take place. The demand to know where are secondary qualities and illusory objects is ambiguous: "Literally they are wherever a certain interaction of at least three factors is taking place."⁹⁸

96. Ibid, p.598.

97. Ibid, p.603.

98. Ibid, p.604.

Specific location is not intrinsic or inherent, but "has reference to actual or potential behavior of the organism."

Dewey was one objective relativist who was unwilling to locate the properties in or at the thing. This can be compared with McGilvary's treatment of the matter. He described certain experimental data that demonstrated how patients reported that a variety of secondary qualities were sensed when their exposed cortices were electrically stimulated. McGilvary refused, however, to draw subjectivistic conclusions from that. On the contrary, he claimed that in taking secondary qualities to be "epiphysical," he was generalizing these findings. But the question for him is how such epiphysical qualities can be qualities of physical objects.⁹⁹ It is clear that McGilvary is committed to locating properties and qualities in nature, and as a "natural accrual" to physical things in nature. The answer to the question is embraced in the third postulate of his perspective realism, which says a physical thing is

and is nothing but the totality of the physical relational characters it has at that time, but this definition of a physical thing does not preclude such a thing from having other characters in whatever non-physical relation it stands at that time to other things . . . when some physical things come to stand in non-physical relations they acquired certain non-physical qualities in these latter relations. But these acquisitions were as natural under the conditions under which they arose as the previously existing physical things.¹⁰⁰

Whitehead is then quoted: "For natural philosophy . . . everything perceived is in nature." Red is not a physical character,

but it may be, and often is, perceived as a character of a physical thing. It is a natural accrual to the physical thing when this

99. McGilvary, Realism, V, p.28.

100. Ibid, V, p.30.

latter becomes a term in the non-physical relation of consciousness; or conversely stated when the physical thing appears as red to some conscious subject. It not only appears as red but it is red in this new relation in which it comes to stand to the conscious subject. And what is true of red . . . is also true of sound, taste, odors, etc....¹⁰¹

And he aptly summed up the new objective-relativist attitude toward subjectivity and the qualities traditionally associated with it:

There were no such characters until consciousness occurred and with its occurrence expanded the physical world into the world of nature. With this expansion something new occurred but not a new world set over against the physical world with a gulf between the two. There is no such gulf. Let us call what is new in this world the world of mind . . . Mind is a physical organism when conscious. Thus the world of mind is not separated by a logically impassable gulf from the world of physics. The connection between the two consists in the fact that certain physical processes in physical organisms give rise to the epiphysical world of mind.¹⁰²

In this way, the objective relativists were denying the traditional subjectivistic conclusions that critics like Lovejoy were drawing (and doing so in explicit reference to objective relativism) when the relativistic conditioning influences of the organism were made a part of objectivity. But Lovejoy and others had some reasons for their criticisms; the precise character of this conditioning influence, the character of the relativism the objective relativists were setting forth, was never clearly stated. But there was great concern over the problem, and many contributions were made to answering it.

Contributing to the traditional subjectivistic conclusions was the notion that if the organism caused something to appear, something to be there that was not there previously, then what appeared must necessarily partake of at least some of the (subjective) qualities of the organism. The reality of what appeared was thus identified with its occurrence.

101. Ibid, V, p.31.

102. Ibid, V, p.31.

McGilvary's treatment of the conditioning role of the organism sought to avoid the difficulty by stating it in terms of function; more precisely, in terms of mathematical functioning. Thus he pointed out how the relation of sonship can be the condition of the cognate relation of brotherhood. Such a condition, however, is not necessarily the cause of the physical existence of the terms of this "conditioned complex," nor need the condition be one of the terms in that complex.¹⁰³

What distinguishes mathematical functioning is that a thing as a function of another thing does not thereby do something to it. But in a physiological function, for example, each function is the performance of an act by an organ upon what is supplied to that organ, and that performance takes place where the organ is. In this case there is physical contact or action.¹⁰⁴ But in the mathematical function there is an absence of such "energetic transaction": "Indeed this absence of energetic transaction from station point to objects in a perspective is a general characteristic of perspectives."¹⁰⁵

As a part of his abiding interest in the problem of relations, McGilvary discusses in his forthcoming book the problem of the status of relations that carry with them some notion of action going on between the terms related. For example, is consciousness a transitive or an intransitive relation? First of all, McGilvary notes a plethora of confusion in the dictionary statements of the meaning of "transitive" and "intransitive." He suggests that consciousness is the kind of relation that "transists." This expresses for McGilvary "the function of all relations that are physically inert. Such a relation is consciousness as my analysis reveals it in

103. E. B. McGilvary, "Perceptual And Memory Perspectives," Journal Of Philosophy, 1933, XXX, p.310.

104. Ibid, p.317.

105. Ibid, p.318.

the situation in which it occurs."¹⁰⁶

In his earlier article on perspectives McGilvary had offered the notion of relations "inter-sisting," instead of "subsisting," and "each relation has (or better, is) its own kind of intersistence."¹⁰⁷

Any relation between terms is between the terms, but the kind of betweenness is the kind of betweenness that the relation is . . . each relation is its own kind of betweenness, and each betweenness is its own kind of relation.¹⁰⁸

Thus the equality between an ounce of gold in Madrid in 1930 and in Chicago in 1933 does not stretch spatially and temporally--does not lie in the space and time.¹⁰⁹ "If the existence of anything is defined as that thing's being in time (or in space and in time), then by definition the time-relations in which it stands do not exist."¹¹⁰ What then is their status? It is not subsistence because there is no evidence that a relation has any being apart from the terms it relates. "Its being is its being-between . . . inter-sistence." It is one thing to abstract a relation from its terms to give freedom to manipulate it. It is another thing to set up what is thus abstracted as an eternal structure.¹¹¹

Although he does not say so explicitly, there is good reason to believe that McGilvary was repeating this concept in his later notion of "transists." And it would seem that the notion of "absence of energetic transaction" in the earlier paper is embraced in the later book by the concept of relations that are "physically inert."

A perspective for McGilvary therefore includes conditions as an integral

106. McGilvary, Realism, II, p.4 note 5.

107. E. B. McGilvary, "Perspectives," p.322.

108. Ibid, pp.321-22.

109. Ibid, p.321.

110. Ibid, p.322.

111. Ibid, pp.322-23. McGilvary goes further in his study of relations in an article that is to be re-printed in his forthcoming book: "Relations In General And Universals In Particular."

part such that where there is a different conditioning going on, as in the case of color-blindness, there is a different perspective:

Given such factors, then there is given such color. But none of the physical energy of the factors is transferred into the color quality. The color does not start from the organism and reach out with finite velocity to the apple. Whatever reaching is done is from the apple to the organism . . . with velocity c , and there is further reaching from retina to brain with different velocity.¹¹²

Note how this is much the same thing Dewey said about "sense" in sense-quality referring to the means of production and not to the nature of the quality produced.

And what McGilvary says about color goes for all secondary and tertiary qualities. It should be noted that he is speaking here only of qualities and perception, and not of experiment, action, or doing. Thus his restriction of the organism's role to a mathematical type of functioning is not necessarily a denial of the overt physical functioning of experimentalism.

McGilvary is clear that qualities have an entirely natural status, and furthermore, that they are where naive perception indicates:

Does our vision assure us that the light we see would be there even if we did not see it? I find no such assurance . . . Without interpretation all that my vision 'tells' me is that what I see 'is there' where I see it and when I am seeing it. May I regard what I thus see as a part of Nature? Why not?¹¹³

Relativity Theory, McGilvary rightly points out, tells us that a thing like length is relative to some other length; i.e., to some other character of a part of Nature.

If this be the case, then why may not seen light be a character of a

112. McGilvary, "Perspectives," p.319.

113. E. B. McGilvary, "Woodbridge's 'An Essay On Nature,'" Journal Of Philosophy, 1941, XXXVIII, p.153.

part of Nature even though it be what it is only in relation to the seeing organism, itself also a part of Nature? . . . the very admission that it is in natural relation to an admitted part of Nature seems to be the best reason possible, not for exclusion from, but for inclusion in Nature.¹¹⁴

And the same holds true of consciousness as a natural relation:

A theory that everything in Nature is relative and that consciousness is one of the natural relations, occurring under natural conditions, I presented tentatively in my recent Carus Lectures . . .¹¹⁵

The occurrence of qualities of color, taste, beauty, etc. is as natural an occurrence as is that of extension, mass or weight. Such a view follows any theory that posits a continuity of experience with nature like objective relativism posited. These qualities may not be of primary importance to science, but they are of importance to any philosophy of nature. Replying to Cohen's charge of anthropomorphism, Dewey claimed that taking account of these experienced qualities in a philosophy of nature by no means precludes getting from experience to the non-human or physical.¹¹⁶ Cohen's charge is similar to Murphy's, and both are based on a failure to see the difference between philosophy and science in Dewey's view, especially as it relates to the personal, subjective or relativistic factors of the involvement of mind.

But note in the last two quotations above from McGilvary how, in his desire to overcome any notion of a substantial difference between qualities, there is a tendency to obscure the fact that an important difference still remains. This is an example of how objective relativists themselves so integrated mind and nature that one tended to disappear into the other (usually mind into nature). It is part of the failure to stipulate--if not to

114. Ibid, p.154.

115. Ibid, p.154.

116. John Dewey, Problems Of Men (New York, 1946), pp.196-98.

actually attend to--the difference between Rel.1 and Rel.2.

The fact that there is a world of interactions (Rel.1) and that knowledge is an instance of such interaction (Rel.2), is evidence for Dewey that

. . . the idea that knowledge . . . inserts something opaque between the interactions of things, is hardly less than infantile. Knowledge as science modifies the particular interactions that come within its reach, because it is itself a modification of interactions, due to taking into account their past and future.¹¹⁷

Dewey shows why a position like objective relativism has occurred in philosophy. It is a reaction to the general separation of belief and knowledge, of the personal or subjective from the non-personal or objective.

Aversion to making science a means of determining the right operation of personal factors, just as the technical and material apparatus of a painter determines his product, is well grounded if the personal is outside of nature. Made a means to something personal conceived in this sense, science loses its objectivity, and becomes infected with the traits which characterize the merely private and arbitrary.¹¹⁸

However, if the "block universe" as the object of knowledge is discarded,

If individualized qualities, status arrests, limiting 'ends,' and contingent changes characterize nature, then they manifest themselves in the uses, enjoyments and sufferings, the searchings and strivings which form conscious experience. These are as realistic, as 'objectively' natural, as are the constituents of the object of cognitional experience.¹¹⁹

For Dewey, experimental science is simple in principle, albeit infinitely varied in its outward forms:

We know an object when we know how it is made, and we know how it is made in the degree in which we ourselves make it. Old tradition compels us to call thinking 'mental.' But 'mental' thought is but partial experimentation, terminating in preliminary readjustments, confined within the organism . . . When 'outer' and 'inner' activity come together in a single experimental operation, used as the only adequate method of discovery and proof, effective criticism, consistent and ordered valuation, emerged. Thought aligned itself with other arts

117. Dewey, Nature, p.414.

118. Ibid, p.423.

119. Ibid, pp.423-24.

that shape objects by informing things with meanings.¹²⁰

Note especially how it is in experimental operation and control that the outer and the inner (objective and subjective) come together, an example of the experimentalism by which objective relativism sought to integrate "subject" and "object," or subjectivity and objectivity.

Perhaps what kept the realists from seeing the need to fully integrate the subjective or relative with the objective was their failure to see that knowledge or knowing does not begin with a "tabula rasa" upon which knowledge is inscribed; that, on the contrary, the antecedent state of the "subject" has to be accounted for. Dewey pointed out that there was always some belief, some "received and asserted meaning," some degree of mind present prior to knowing. The "art of knowing" in all its forms criticizes a belief which "has passed current as genuine coin, with a view to its revision." It ends when "freer, richer and more secure objects of belief are instituted as goods of immediate acceptance. The operation is one of doing and making in the literal sense."¹²¹

And the traditional separation of knowing and doing--the object of one of the major objective-relativist critiques--is a result of a metaphysics in which a thoroughgoing view of the world as related (Rel.1) with a relativism in the form of Rel.2 as an instance of it, is denied or rejected. The knowing-doing separation is a "survival of the notion that there are things which can exist and be known apart from active connection with other things."¹²² Again, knowledge is a mode of the world's interactions, like the growth of plants and the movement of the earth. "But it is a mode which renders other modes luminous, important, valuable, capable of direction,

120. Ibid, p.428.

121. Ibid, p.429.

122. Ibid, p.435.

causes being translated into means and effects into consequences."¹²³

The view of the world as interrelated must include on any naturalistic view an interrelated-ness of the human organism and the world. But this cannot be made just another instance of the world's interrelatedness, or any interrelation like that between inanimate things:

Any notion that human action is identical with that of non-living things or with that of 'lower' animals is silly. It is contradicted by the fact that behavior is so organized in human beings as to have for its consequence all that we call civilization, culture, law, arts--fine and industrial, language, morals, institutions, science itself.¹²⁴

This is the presence of mind or a (non-physical) "subject" that I have been identifying with the relativism of objective relativism, and what must be included in a statement of the world as interrelated.

. . . when we are dealing with human behavior, the word designates a kind of behavior in which outcomes of the past and outlook on the future are incorporated . . . we cannot understand the organism until we have taken its history into account . . . We have to place the particular affair studied in a career of development. In dealing with a special chemical reaction . . . we may neglect past history.¹²⁵

The importance of action for the integration of "subject" and "object"--or objectivity and relativity--is well displayed in Dewey's Quest For Certainty. Early in the book he points out how both idealism and the realisms made the common assumption in their theories "that the operation of inquiry excludes any element of practical activity that enters into the construction of the object known."¹²⁶ Even idealism, for all its "activism," failed to set forth a statement of mind that "constructs the known object . . .

123. Ibid, p.435.

124. Dewey, Civilization, p.307.

125. Ibid, pp.307-8.

126. John Dewey, The Quest For Certainty; A Study Of The Relation Of Knowledge And Action (New York, 1929), p.22.

in any observable way, or by means of practical overt acts having a temporal quality," but instead by "some occult internal operation."¹²⁷ Realism and idealism shared the assumption too of a world or reality totally unaffected by the inquiry necessary to its being known.

Dewey also suggested that "interaction" ordinarily signifies overt production of change. Thus if a statement is made of a relatedness of the world, and this relatedness is equated with interaction in the way Murphy did, then interaction must also characterize some part at least of the "subject-object" integration. That is, a Rel.1 must perforce include a Rel.2.

Objective relativism sought then to unite knowing and doing in its experimentalism by showing that

the actual procedures by which the most authentic and dependable knowledge is attained have completely surrendered the separation of knowing and doing . . . that overtly executed operations of interaction are requisite to obtain the knowledge called scientific . . .¹²⁸

Science is experimental, and there are three outstanding characteristics of experimental inquiry:

. . . all experimentation involves overt doing, the making of definite changes in the environment or in our relation to it . . . experiment is not a random activity but is directed by ideas which have to meet the conditions set by the need of the problem inducing the active inquiry . . . the outcome of the directed activity is the construction of a new empirical situation in which objects are differently related to one another, and such that the consequences of directed operations form the objects that have the property of being known.¹²⁹

The relationship, and a difference, between Rel.1 and Rel.2 are suggested by Dewey when he points out how once the separation of knowing and doing is broken down, the exercise of intelligence within nature is seen. Then it is realized that "the observation necessary to knowledge enters into the

127. Ibid, pp.22-3.

128. Ibid, p.79.

129. Ibid, pp.86-7.

natural object known," and

is part and parcel of nature's own continuing interactions. Interactions go on anyway and produce changes. Apart from intelligence, these changes are not directed. They are effects but not consequences, for consequences imply means deliberately employed. When an interaction intervenes which directs the course of change, the scene of natural interaction has a new quality and dimension. This added type of interaction is intelligence . . . it is nature realizing its own potentialities in behalf of a fuller and richer issue of events. Intelligence within nature means liberation and expansion . . .¹³⁰

The "new quality and dimension" resulting from the knowing process arising within the processes of nature is what is added to, or changed in, nature; not from the outside, but nature's possibilities being realized "by operations conducted from within."¹³¹

It is control then that is the major factor in experiment, and control is the basis for objectivity. As Buchler put it:

It is deliberative manipulation which minimizes spontaneity and commits itself to a supreme moral obligation of disinterestedness. The reward of disinterestedness is control. Before the scientist can control nature he must control his ideas. Experiment is cognitive control achieved by the marriage of disinterestedness with manipulative ingenuity.¹³²

The problem of the scientific object versus the perceptual object--the problem of reconciling science with every-day, common sense experience--comes to this:

All that is required in order to apprehend that scientific knowledge as a mode of active operation is a potential ally of the modes of action which sustain values in existence, is to surrender the traditional notion that knowledge is possession of the inner nature of things and is the only way in which they may be experienced as they 'really' are.¹³³

130. Ibid, pp.214-15.

131. Ibid, p.215.

132. Justus Buchler, Toward A General Theory Of Human Judgment (New York, 1951), p.113.

133. Dewey, Quest, p.131.

Knowing and having are not two kinds of knowledge whose objects have to be reconciled: "There are two dimensions of experienced things: one that of having them, and the other that of knowing about them so that we can have them in more meaningful and secure ways . . ."¹³⁴ The objective-relativist critiques of the nature and object of knowing are quite evident:

The objects of science, like the direct objects of the arts, are an order of relations which serve as tools to effect immediate havings and beings.¹³⁵

If science be perfect grasp, or envisagement of being, and if science terminate with a mathematico-mechanical world, then . . . we have upon our hands the problems of reality and appearance.¹³⁶

I have already mentioned that the first "moment" of objective relativism (its first platform plank, as Murphy called it) was the successful critique of atomistic empiricism as embodied in the radical-empiricist theory of objective relations. Both Professor Lamprecht and Dewey noted that one great value in Locke's theory was his insistence that knowledge consists in the perception of a relation.

Where Locke departs from scholastic and classic theory is in holding that knowledge is not the apprehension of form or idea as such, but is the apprehension of a relation between forms or ideas.¹³⁷

The identification of the object of knowledge with relations is a part of Rel.1. But this is only a part of what was implied in the objective-relativist metaphysics that described the world as a series of interrelated events. Dewey is aware of this when he points out that what was really the inadequacy of Locke's theory was his failure to conclude from his "relative theory of knowledge" that existence is relational inherently.¹³⁸

134. Dewey, Nature, pp.20-1. 135. Ibid, pp.135-36. 136. Ibid, p.136.

137. John Dewey, "Substance, Power And Quality In Locke," Philosophical Review, 1926, XXIV, pp.22-3.

138. Ibid, p.24.

Those who criticized the objective relativist for his alleged violation of the "law" of contradiction also failed to see that a relational theory of knowledge and a relational theory of existence go together. And further, a relational theory of existence means an end forever to the traditional notion of "inherent" properties, and also embodies a critique of the notion that knowledge reproduces an antecedent object, or tells us what is (or was) there in it.

In eliminating the absolute concepts of space, time and motion, Relativity Theory also did away with the notion that physics deals with inherent properties.

For that notion, it compels the substitution of the notion that they designate relations of events. As such relations, they secure, in their generality, the possibility of linking together objects viewed as events in a general system of linkage and translation. They are the means of correlating observations made at different times and places, whether by one observer or by many, so that translations may be effected from one to another . . . they connect, through relevant operations, the discontinuities of individualized observations and experiences into continuity with one another. Their validity is a matter of their efficacy in performance of this function; it is tested by results and not by correspondence with antecedent properties of existence.¹³⁹

Developments in science have provided the basis for the return of all qualities to an equally natural standing. In Murphy's terms, the Anti-Copernican Revolution returned mind to nature as a counter-revolution to the Copernican Revolution that had read mind out of nature. This is how Dewey traced the history of it:

First tertiary qualities were eliminated; it was recognized that moral qualities are not agencies in determining the structure of nature. Then secondary qualities . . . were ejected. But so-called primary qualities took their place . . . It was not until the threshold of our time was reached that scientific inquiries perceived that their own problems and methods required an inter-

139. Dewey, Quest, pp.146-47.

pretation of 'primary qualities' in terms of relations, such as position, motion and temporal span. In the structure of distinctively scientific objects these relations are indifferent to qualities.¹⁴⁰

3. PERCEPTION, CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVE RELATIVISM

The view of the world as related or interrelated led some objective relativists to a further elaboration of the notion that interrelated characters are meaningless (or at least take on a different meaning) if they are dealt with separately apart from the context of interaction. Thus Dewey and Bentley set forth their view of "transaction." Taking things separately, more or less isolated and viewed as acting under their own powers, they called the theory of "self-action." The opposite to that was "trans-action":

where systems of description and naming are employed to deal with aspects and phases of action, without final attribution to 'elements' or other presumptively detachable or independent 'entities,' 'essences,' or 'realities,' and without isolation of presumptively detachable 'relations' from such detachable 'elements.'¹⁴¹

"Inter-action" was a more or less middle theory in which "thing is balanced against thing in causal interconnection."¹⁴² The distinction between "inter-action" and "trans-action" is based upon the two possible meanings of the prefix "inter": "One is for 'between,' 'in-between,' or 'between the parts of.' The other is for 'mutually,' 'reciprocally.'"¹⁴³ "Inter-action" is the first meaning, and "trans-action" is the second. The connotation of "across" or "side to side" is implied in the use of the prefix "trans."

In these terms, the meaning of "relativism" I have identified with Rel.2, and have called the crucial meaning of the relativism in objective relativism, can be associated with the notion of "trans-action." How this

140. Dewey, Logic, p.116.

141. John Dewey & Arthur F. Bentley, Knowing And The Known (Boston, 1949), p.108.

142. Ibid, p.108.

143. Ibid, p.295.

is so, as well as the attempt to utilize the notion of "transaction" in perception theory, can be demonstrated in the transactional view of perception recently proposed by a group of psychologists.

Transaction for them

carries the double implication (1) that all parts of the situation enter into it as active participants, and (2) that they owe their very existence as encountered in the situation to this fact of active participation and do not appear as already existing entities merely interacting with each other without affecting their own identity.¹⁴⁴

On such a view perception is thoroughly relativistic:

. . . perceiving is always done by a particular person from his own unique position in space and time and with his own combination of experiences and needs. Perception always enters into the transaction from the unique personal behavioral center of the perceiving individual.¹⁴⁵

Note how this is not just physical relativity. It is the radical-empiricist proposition that "the world is as it is experienced," which is embodied in their notion of "externalization":

. . . each of us, through perceiving, creates for himself his own psychological environment by attributing certain aspects of his experience to an environment which he believes exists independent of the experience.¹⁴⁶

The notion, however, is highly ambiguous. Much depends on how the authors view the "attributing" done by the organism. Is it a projection of some sort, for example, instead of the objective-relativist view that what is attributed is there? As it stands, the statement is suspiciously not an objective relativism. There is the suggestion that experience of the world and the world experienced are not the same; that the organism takes from one (his experience) and gives to the other (the world). There

144. William H. Ittelson & Hadley Cantril, Perception; A Transactional Approach (Doubleday Papers In Psychology), New York, Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1954, p.3.

145. Ibid, p.2.

146. Ibid, p.2.

is also the authors' use of "belief" which is at best ambiguous. Similarly, the authors' notion of a "psychological environment" leads one to suspect that such an environment (associated with the organism's experience) is being tacitly differentiated from the physical environment (the world that is experienced).

Thus later on they say that the world-as-experienced "is the product of perception, not the cause of it."¹⁴⁷ It seems clear that the world and the world-as-experienced are being differentiated even though the authors' preface to the remark is: "Without taking any metaphysical position regarding the existence of a real world independent of experience." On the contrary, would not their own transactional position demand that the world-as-experienced be both cause and product of perception because it is both the world and the world-as-experienced? The world-as-experienced is a perspective of the world.

The authors come to view the problem of perception as the "degree of correspondence between the significance which we externalize and that which we encounter," and its process. The correspondence is one between different experiences, and not between any notion of experience and reality.¹⁴⁸ In an objective-relativist view, however, since both experiences ("externalizing" and "encountering") are equally valid or real, the question of their correspondence is the question of our actions or responses to perception. As the authors indicate, the organism's intentions have to be taken into account. For the authors the study of perception is the study of error. They can only study the variation or lack of correspondence alleged to exist between externalizing and encountering. To study their correspondence would be meaningless, for to the extent that they correspond they are the same and thus no distinction can be made between them. In short, the problem of perception is, for them, the problem of error.

147. Ibid, p.5.

148. Ibid, p.7.

The notion of externalizing means for them that what we externalize are "significances which we experience as existing apart from us," while what we encounter is that "which we experience as a consequence of action."¹⁴⁹ The authors would have to refrain from attributing more reality to one of these rather than the other to avoid a phenomenism, or appearance-reality distinction. It is not clear that they do, however. They offer the example of the difference between how big an object looks and how big it measures as an example of the externalizing-encountering distinction. Implicit in the example is the idea that the latter is more real, valid, or objective than the former. Why else do they deem it necessary to study the degree of correspondence between them? But they will have to clearly demonstrate on what basis they can thus distinguish the two experiences.

In this connection I should note the question of what kind of relativity is to be attributed to perception. Is it physical, non-physical, or both? If we take the non-cognitive theory of perception as true, we would have to say the relativity is physical only, because in this theory perception is said to be physical only. However, such perceptions when taken up into knowledge are responded to, acted upon, or inferred from. At this point, the theory continues, mind is present, and we now have a relativity to mind. But that is manifestly not just physical, and hence the second kind of relativity is now involved.

The literature on perception theory demonstrates that it is quite difficult to locate in behavior precisely where the distinction can be made between physical perception and perceptions responded to (i.e., knowledge). Nor is it clear as yet precisely what elements of perception are physical or organic only, and what elements in it constitute the kind of response or mental activity we would associate with knowledge. Therefore, there may be

149. Ibid, p.9.

good reason for objecting to the statement that because perception is not knowledge, perception is physical only. That is, the responses or inferences of the organism (which the non-cognitive theory identifies with knowledge more than with perception proper) might very well be such an integral part of perception that, though the distinction between a physical and epiphysical stage may be necessary and desirable, it can only be functional. This, of course, would be entirely satisfactory to those who maintain the non-cognitive theory. For my purposes here, I am intent on establishing that since perception has these physical and non-physical factors, the two kinds of relativity must be distinguished.

The failure to distinguish physical and non-physical relativism (Rel.1 and Rel.2) occurs also in the literature on contextualism. For example, contextualism for the scientist, and for the philosopher, is not the same. And it is not the same because of the essential difference between science and philosophy. It is customary, however, for contextualism to be expressed in terms of the general relatedness of things, with no specific mention of mind or "subject." This would be, without further elaboration, scientific contextualism. Cohen's statement is typical:

. . . the facts of nature are so connected that the intelligible character of anything must involve its relations to certain other (not all) facts, which are said to be relevant to it. Science, then, views facts not as isolated or separate events, but as connected in essence.¹⁵⁰

150. Morris R. Cohen, Reason And Nature; An Essay On The Meaning Of Scientific Method (New York, 1931), p.107. In pointing out these examples of Rel.1 without concomitant statements of Rel.2 I am well aware that certain statements may in fact have implied precisely what I mean by Rel.2. I am not denying then that these writers did not entertain such a concept. I am pointing out, however, that in their statements of relatedness, or inter-relatedness, there is an ambiguity that leaves it in doubt whether in fact the writer was taking up this relatedness in the fashion that is identifiable as an objective relativism.

The problem then with various statements of philosophical contextualism is the possibility that (even while not intending to do so) no more than a physical contextualism is established.

Professor Randall's statement of contextualism (here in the case of historical inquiry) is somewhat clearer than others on this score. In his emphasis on "judgments of meaning," "interpretation of the past," selection, arrangement, and connections, the more crucial kind of relativism is implied. In fact, this kind of emphasis is the distinguishing factor between history as bare chronicle and a more profitable study of history. Here is how it figures in his theory:

. . . it is impossible to deny that this selective emphasis and singling out is always relative to some determinate context of inquiry, that it can hope to be objectively valid within that context and situation, while it must remain inadequate or irrelevant to others.¹⁵¹

This is the relativism (Rel.1 and Rel.2) of objective relativism, and it is clear that objectivity is an integral part of it:

Knowledge is objective only for some determinate context--knowledge of the structure essential for that context . . . the context is always a teleological one, pointing to a structure of means and ends; and in that context the relation of means to ends will thus be objective. The focus in any history . . . will be relative to that time and context--it will be the problem or the issue for that history . . . It will be historically relative, and therefore objective . . . 'Objectivity' means always being objective for something . . . there can be no objectivity without an objective.¹⁵²

The historian, Randall says, must select from an infinite variety of relatednesses which past events disclose, a selection of what is important for that particular history. If it is not to be merely important for him, it must have an objective focus, something to be done, some problem he sees

151. John Herman Randall, Jr., "On Understanding The History Of Philosophy," Journal Of Philosophy, 1939, XXXVI, pp.460-61.

152. Ibid, p.472.

forced on men.

The history of what is important for that problem, of its materials and conditions and resources, will then be perfectly objective--in a sense in which no mere recording of arbitrarily selected facts could ever be.¹⁵³

It is apparent then that merely to say in a statement of contextualism that there is a relatedness involved, or even that the objective is not objective until it is relative, does not guarantee a consistent philosophical relativism. What it is these things are related or relative to must always be stipulated. To say it is a relation to context does not suffice; it could be the kind of context the scientist would refer to--i.e., a physical one.

However, it might be argued that when the scientist speaks of context, or perspective, there is always an observer present. To be sure, it is this observer that is always assumed to be present in all scientific observations; i.e., the observer's body figures in the relativity of such observations. But as I have indicated, the extent to which the scientist qua scientist needs to take the presence of an observer into his considerations is physical only. He can beg off all other considerations; i.e., considerations like the kind of mental equipment or mind such an observer must have. He can beg it off, but that does not mean it can be wholly ignored. In raising these questions modern physics could be said to have made philosophy possible and perhaps necessary as well.

The essential difference between a philosophical and a scientific context is suggested in Dewey's statement of contextualism:

Context includes at least those matters which for brevity I shall call background and selective interest . . . the whole environment of which

153. Ibid, p.472.

philosophy must take account in all its enterprises [is background]. A background is implicit in some form and to some degree in all thinking, although as background it does not come into explicit purview; that is, it does not form a portion of the subject-matter which is consciously attended to, thought of, examined, inspected, turned over. Background is both temporal and spatial.¹⁵⁴

Further on Dewey notes that "temporal background" is intellectual as well as existential.¹⁵⁵ That "selective interest" means a thoroughgoing relativism is abundantly clear:

Every particular case of thinking is what it is because of some attitude, some bias if you will; and no general theory can be framed which is not based upon what happens in particular cases. This attitude is no immediate part of what is consciously reflected upon, but it determines the selection of this rather than that subject-matter.¹⁵⁶

In an earlier place Dewey had noted the necessity of Rel.2:

We bring to the simplest observation a complex apparatus of habits, of accepted meanings and techniques. Otherwise observation is the blankest of stares . . . There is a contrast between physical objects and objects as they are believed to be, even though what they are believed to be is an unescapable medium in observing what they are.¹⁵⁷

Selective interest, like the neo-realist's selective realism, points to the kind of subjectivity or relativism objective relativism seeks to integrate with objectivity. Just how relativistic it is, and how much a part of any context, perspective, appearance or objectivity is indicated by Dewey when he says:

The aspect of context which I have called 'interest' is known in philosophical terminology as the 'subjective' . . . Since it cannot in its entirety be made an explicit object of reflection and yet since it affects all matters thought of, it is legitimately called a phase of context . . . the subjective as determining attitude is not to be equated to this 'ism [of subjectivism] It

154. John Dewey, "Context And Thought," University Of California Publications In Philosophy (Berkeley, 1931), XII, pp.212-13.

155. Ibid, p.214.

156. Ibid, p.215.

157. Dewey, Nature, p.219.

is not concern which is objectionable even when it takes the form of bias. It is certain kinds of bias that are obnoxious . . . To be 'objective' in thinking is to have a certain sort of selective interest operative.¹⁵⁸

Objective relativism is the deliberate attempt to save both the objectivity and the relativity of the "subject-object" relationship. The saving is based in turn upon the belief that both are necessarily involved in one another. As we have seen, this involves a critique of the traditional notions of objectivity and subjectivity. Hook once pointed to this as distinctive of Pragmatic Realism, in addition to its being a middle ground between Aristotelian objectivism and Kantian subjectivism:

The subjective is subsumed under the objective and not opposed to it as a diametrically different order of being . . . interest is given its place as the differentiating mark of a specific kind of organization so that the problem of bias and selection can no longer be dismissed as a piece of psychological impertinence.¹⁵⁹

But one often encounters in the literature the notion that objective relativism consists of any instance in which "objective" and "subjective," or "absolute" and "relative," are combined. Although it is not intended, a simple identification of objective relativism with the juxtaposition of opposite terms, without further elaboration of the basis upon which they are brought together, tends to make objective relativism a verbal affair alone. There is an instance of this in the index of Morris R. Cohen's Reason And Nature. There are several citations under the heading "Objective Relativism" in the index, but nowhere in the text, I believe, does the name "objective relativism" occur.

The first reference in the index is to Cohen's treatment of probability theory in which he outlines the objective and the subjective views

158. Dewey, "Context," p.216.

159. Sidney Hook, The Metaphysics Of Pragmatism (Chicago & London, 1927), p.111.

of probability and then suggests that the one-sidedness of both be avoided by adopting a theory that is "both relativistic and logically objective."¹⁶⁰ Again, the heading "Objective Relativism" refers the reader to Cohen's "relativistic conception of the a priori," meaning that a proposition is a priori "for a definite field."¹⁶¹ Cohen's "principle of polarity" is also identified as objective relativism.¹⁶² The next citation refers to Cohen's statement that the relational structure which is the object of mathematics is "just as objective . . . as the physical entities related."¹⁶³ And the final citation refers to Cohen's belief in the possibility of a plurality of moral systems analogous to the plurality of geometries.¹⁶⁴ In short, objective relativism is identified with a reconciliation (or integration) of opposites, contextualism, objectivity of relations, and pluralistic ethics.

The relativism of objective relativism, in addition to including notions of context, perspective, appearance, subjectivity and objectivity, also includes an individualism:

Interest, as the subjective, is after all equivalent to individuality or uniqueness. There is no reason to limit its presence and operation to the organic and mental, although it is especially exemplified there. Everything which exists may be supposed to have its own unduplicated manner of acting and reacting . . . It is not a part or constituent of subject-matter; but as a manner of action it selects subject-matter and leaves a qualitative impress upon it.¹⁶⁵

There are two important points in the emphasized portion. One refers to the fact that the integration of the subjective or relative with the objective as carried out by objective relativism does not mean to give to exis-

160. Cohen, Reason, p.129. 161. Ibid, p.144. 162. Ibid, p.165.

163. Ibid, p.202. 164. Ibid, p.441.

165. Dewey, "Context," pp.216-17 my emphasis.

tence a psychic or subjective character. This is why the two meanings of "relativism" should be distinguished. To say that the world is "ultimately relative," as Murphy did, means such relatedness has to be limited to a physical relatedness or interrelatedness to avoid being involved with some brand of pan-psychism, or the kind of illicit generalization of the human context which Murphy deplored. On the other hand, and this is the second point of the quotation, part of that world is the relative or subjective. To integrate it into one's world-view requires an extensive delineation of what it means to be objective and to be relative. This is the delineation for which objective relativism laid the foundation.

4. PHILOSOPHICAL RELATIVISM AND RELATIVITY THEORY

I turn now to a consideration of the general problem of distinguishing philosophical from physical or scientific relativism, and the associated problem of the philosophical quality of Relativity Theory.

It will be recalled that I have already distinguished between the practice of science and of philosophy, and their respective conclusions. I also noted that while both science and philosophy are uniquely human endeavors, there is a difference in how much of the human element is directly pertinent to their respective subject-matters and the statements drawn from their study of them. Viewed as a human endeavor, science and its results display a relativistic aspect in the philosophical sense. This constitutes the philosopher's approach to science, and the relativism is philosophical. But viewed as an accepted body of organized subject-matter available for further use, questions of the human element, the relativistic or subjective aspect, are irrelevant. This constitutes the scientist's approach to science, and any relativism is physical.

When Murphy called it the "misnamed theory of 'relativity'" he was

correct. The theory actually seeks to discover invariance, a certain absoluteness, in the face of such relativity; to find conclusions that will be invariant for all the relative contexts, perspectives, or relations. On the other hand, philosophical relativism includes, of necessity, statements that refer to mind, knower or the "subject." In this case we do not seek to eliminate the relativity, but instead we seek to determine the nature of its necessary presence, and to delineate what it means, e.g., for science to "transcend" or go beyond the relativity of measurement and achieve an invariance. The important point is that while science can ignore such considerations in its statements or conclusions, it does not mean that the grounds for such considerations are not there in the pursuit of science. There is a genuine basis and need for being philosophical about science.

Philosophers in and out of objective relativism were by no means ignorant of such a difference; of the distinction, for example, between the physical and the non-physical (or epiphenomenal, as McGilvary called it). In his statement of a "contextualistic theory of perception," Professor Lewis Hahn indicated that this distinction must be made. He distinguished between the three possibilities of a thing's property. For the property of size, for example, there is the

object's standard size . . . which may be determined by direct measurement within the manipulatory area. Then, of course, there are the object's perspective or projective sizes, the sizes that would be projected on a plane immediately in front of the eye . . . Finally, there is the size the distant object is perceptually accepted as having, the 'attained' value.¹⁶⁶

What is important here is that the "perceptually accepted or sensible size" is not identical with the "perspective size."

166. Lewis Edwin Hahn, "A Contextualistic Theory Of Perception," University Of California Publications In Philosophy (Berkeley, 1942), XXII, p.72.

The perspective size of an object from any one point, being a fixed function of the retinal impression . . . remains the same, whereas the perceptually accepted size of the object from that point may vary a great deal from time to time for any particular observer . . .¹⁶⁷

This is not to say that perspective size does not determine within limits what the object will be accepted as having. But it does deny most emphatically, he said, that the perceived size is a fixed function of the perspective size.¹⁶⁸ And the difference between what a thing is perceptually accepted" to be and that which it is with respect to the manipulatory area is not a difference of subjective and objective, but rather a functional difference; a difference with regard to the function it performs, and not an existential or ontological difference.¹⁶⁹

Hahn agreed with Peirce in rejecting the kind of causal theory of perception that McGilvary replaced with a concept of mathematical function:

That a given datum belongs to a thing does not seem to me equivalent to saying that it is caused by that thing, even though as a matter of fact the thing may be its differential condition . . . Primarily . . . the relation is one of being a sign of or . . . an indication of. Holding that a datum belongs to a thing means that it indicates certain of its characteristics, that it serves as a sign of the action patterns into which it will fit.¹⁷⁰

It is the "function as an indicator or sign" which is, pragmatically speaking, "central for the relation of belonging to." And similar reasoning would hold with regard to the objective-relativist concepts of the substantive-attribute relation.¹⁷¹

Hahn also criticized the traditional notion of the object and nature of perception:

167. Ibid, pp.72-73. Note how perspective here is entirely physical in nature.

168. Ibid, p.73

169. Ibid, p.76

170. Ibid, p.194

171. Ibid, p.195

Practical perception is very definitely not an attempt to copy or mirror reality in some way, and the perceived property is not an inner reality to be either spuriously projected into or compared with some outer realm of facts. Practical perception is an attempt to order behavior objects for use. It seeks to measure or 'size up' nature for future action, not to copy it.¹⁷²

At the beginning of his article Hahn pointed to two different interpretations or strains of objective relativism:

One a modification of the traditional mechanistic naturalism, the other a pragmatic or contextualistic strain. On the first . . . objective relativism offers a relative version of the mechanistic spatiotemporal field of location, retaining the idea that the most basic fact about any object is its location in such a field. This is still described in basically mechanistic terms, though it is admitted that the traditional account of the distinction between the subjective 'inner' realm and the objective 'outer' world requires certain modifications . . . On the second interpretation we get a pragmatic or contextualistic metaphysics, which offers, I think, not merely a modification of the old mechanistic naturalism, but a fundamentally different system of interpretation . . . The pragmatist or contextualist gives an important place to spatial and temporal location, but he explains this emphasis in terms of the importance of such location for purposes of control rather than of its metaphysical priority.¹⁷³

This distinction parallels the distinction between Rel.1 and Rel.2. Note especially how Hahn delineates the difference between the relativism of space and time of the first strain, and the relativism of the contextualism in the second strain in terms of the latter's interest in space and time location for purposes of control. I take this to be a recognition of the presence of mind or "subject" which I have identified with philosophical relativism, and have said is mandatory for the relativism of objective relativism. But it remains true that a number of alleged objective relativists displayed almost exclusively the first strain or interpretation. Hahn singled out Lenzen in this connection, and I would add

172. Ibid, pp.75-6.

173. Ibid, pp.5-6 note.

Northrop and Marhenke as further examples. These philosophers were pre-occupied with Relativity Theory and the question of its philosophical implications. And it seemed as though they were so involved in Relativity Theory that they were prevented from taking up the second, contextualistic aspect of objective relativism because the relativism they were dealing with in Relativity Theory was not a philosophical relativism.

There are, of course, any number of statements of the philosophical implications of Relativity Theory. Some of them (like those of the writers singled out above) involve detailed and complex studies of the Theory itself, while others are more concerned with statements of the basic difference between science and philosophy. My approach to this problem is based strictly on the latter position. When I say that physical and philosophical relativism are not the same, do not refer to the same thing, and are not deducible one from the other, I do so on an initial assumption of what science is and what philosophy is. I do not, however, mean to imply that they are not influenced by one another. Certainly philosophy begins with science--but it doesn't end with it. The problem of the "subject-object" integration is the philosophical problem, within which the knowledge relation is a part--but only a part. I do not believe that science, strictly speaking, ever seeks to deal with this problem. On the contrary, I have maintained that science can, for purposes of its statements and conclusions, neglect all references to mind or "subject." The difference is one of subject-matter; science is interested in the world only as it is "closed to mind."

In The Concept of Nature Whitehead speaks of "thinking homogeneously" and "thinking heterogeneously." The first refers to thinking "about nature

without thinking about thought," and the second refers to thinking about "nature in conjunction with thought about the fact that nature is thought about." And he identifies natural science with an exclusive concern with "homogeneous thoughts about nature."¹⁷⁴ It was this "self-containedness of nature" that Whitehead referred to in his statement that "nature is closed to mind." It did not mean, of course, that mind can never know nature. And "natural philosophy" for him, at least in these early books, meant expressing "those natural relations between things perceptively known," while never asking, e.g., what is in the mind and in nature.¹⁷⁵ The exclusion of mind from natural philosophy very likely was behind Whitehead's tendency in these early works to account for mind, or make a statement of it, in terms of physical nature alone. Whitehead's critique of the bifurcation of nature, plus his assumption that the data of knowledge can be shown to be in physical nature entirely apart from mind, made his theory swallow up mind into physical nature. All action, for example, is attributed to nature alone.¹⁷⁶

But in his later works Whitehead appears to have almost completely turned about so that where mind was previously dealt with in the terms of physical nature, now physical nature begins to be accounted for in terms of mind. This new approach was displayed in the confusion of Dewey and

174. A. N. Whitehead, The Concept of Nature (Cambridge, 1920), p.3.

175. Ibid, pp.29-30. McGilvary criticized this approach of Whitehead's in terms of Whitehead's alleged avoidance of metaphysics. Whitehead's philosophy of nature was a philosophy that left the synthesis of the knower and the known to metaphysics. But McGilvary argues that "he is with an innocent surreptitiousness resorting to a Platonic metaphysics to bring blues and red into nature by the process of 'ingression' or 'ingredience.'" McGilvary, Realism, III, p.38.

176. A. N. Whitehead, An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Natural Knowledge (Cambridge, 1919), p.14.

Whitehead and the charge of animism by Murphy. The change in Whitehead's approach could be said to be (in part, at least) an attempt to come to a more consistent objective relativism.

There are a number of instances in the literature on the philosophy of Relativity Theory in which the identification of philosophical and scientific relativism is held to be unwarranted. Cohen pointed out the difference between the relativism of science and of philosophy. The invariance science seeks

will enable us to dismiss at once the popular impression which, confusing physical relativity with the relativity of knowledge to mind or consciousness, sees in Einstein's work a new support to anti-materialistic subjectivism. In none of the phenomena explained by relativity is there any special reference to mind. When we speak of the length of a body depending upon the state of the observer we do not refer to his consciousness, or subjective feeling but to the velocity of the physical system in which he might set up yardsticks and clocks to measure physical processes.¹⁷⁷

Having corrected the mistaken notion that the relativism of Relativity Theory refers to traditional subjectivism or philosophical relativism, Cohen goes on to conclude that because Relativity Theory seeks invariance in spite of the relativity of observation and measurement, therefore philosophical relativism has been disproved, or at least no longer has any basis. As I pointed out in connection with Murphy, so too with Cohen's treatment of philosophical and scientific relativity: The independence of the two, in the absence of further warrant, has to be taken to be symmetrical. If Relativity Theory is free of philosophical relativism, so too is philosophical relativism free of Relativity Theory. More specifically in this case, if Relativity Theory is not a proof of philosophical relativism, it is not thereby a disproof of it; so long, i.e., as this con-

177. Cohen, Reason, pp.237-38.

clusion is based upon their theoretical or logical independence. However, Cohen claims that Petzoldt is an example of a "psychologic relativist" who has taken Einstein's conclusions to back up

the contention that 'the world is to every one as it seems to him.' But physical relativity like any other scientific theory helps us to correct the illusions of mere seeming. It deals not with what happens to seem to any one but rather with what must seem to any one who makes precise physical observations.¹⁷⁸

There are two points to be made here. First, Cohen is correct in holding that physical relativity does not back up Petzoldt's relativism (which is Dewey's Radical Empiricism if the "seems to him" is replaced by "experienced"). But that raises a second point: the meaning of "seems to him." When Cohen goes on to say Relativity Theory enables us to "correct the illusions of mere seeming," he has introduced considerations of mind or knower into Relativity Theory. He may, or may not, have intended also to imply that Relativity Theory is an aid for escaping "psychologic" (or perhaps philosophical) relativism. At the very least, the introduction of considerations of "illusion" or "mere seeming" in connection with the purpose of Relativity Theory is unwarranted. It would be better to interpret Relativity Theory as pointing out the importance of taking account of the coordinates within which measurements are made, plus providing the means whereby results may be obtained that will be valid for all coordinates. Relativity Theory does not say there is "illusion" or "mere seeming" because measurements are relative to certain coordinates. On the contrary, it says they are perfectly valid, but valid only for those coordinates. Its search for objectivity is the search for the means of transcending this relativity to coordinates.

178. Ibid, p.238

E. B. McGilvary spent a great deal of time on questions of Relativity Theory in their more technical, scientific aspects, but did not thereby limit himself to just that. At one time, looking backward and looking forward in his philosophical career, he said that

Einstein and the relativists, Whitehead and Russell, have been the latest influences. My greatest regret in my present philosophical work is that I have not had an adequate training in the higher mathematics and in mathematical physics. If I mistake not, the metaphysics of the next generation, as that of the seventeenth century, will be in the hands of those who have command of a knowledge of mathematical physics.¹⁷⁹

At the same time he was also saying that "Relativity physics, like any other physics, is only a metrical physics."¹⁸⁰ And he was saying this, and writing articles like his famous exchange with Lovejoy over the "time-retarding journey," to show that it is in our measurements only that certain relativity considerations apply; that in the case of time being "retarded," e.g., there was a distinction to be made between "going more slowly" and "being more slow," the latter not coming under the relativity principle.¹⁸¹ This metrical characteristic of both relativity and quantum physics is stressed by McGilvary in a paper on "Physics and Metaphysics" in which he notes how the space-time interval of physics is apt to be given a character of a kind of thing that remains constant:

This is to substitute metaphysics for physics . . . As a matter of logic, the space-time of the physicist is only a four-dimensional number series, the numbers being numbers ideally obtainable from measurements made in the space and time of visual perception.¹⁸²

179. E. B. McGilvary, "A Tentative Realistic Metaphysics," in Adams & Montague ed., Contemporary American Philosophy (New York, 1930), II, p.132.

180. E. B. McGilvary, "Dialectical Arguments Against Relative Simultaneity," Journal of Philosophy, 1931, XXVIII, pp.434-35.

181. E. B. McGilvary, "The Paradox of the Time-Retarding Journey," Philosophical Review, 1931, XL, p.485 note.

182. McGilvary, "Physics," p.370.

So too with quantum theory: it is mass as number that alone appears in physical theory.¹⁸³ The quantum "h" is a number. "All 'physical constants' are numbers." And in a note McGilvary says the thesis of his paper also has a bearing on the Heisenberg theory of indeterminacy.

... when any philosopher appeals to the findings of modern physics as giving anything else than empirically ascertained measure-numbers and mathematically ascertained relations between such measure numbers, he is appealing to a tribunal that has no jurisdiction in the matter, and therefore has no authority to hand down any decision in the case.¹⁸⁴

Yet is not McGilvary making a distinction here between measurement or number, and thing? In which case, on what basis, or from what perspective, does he do so? His own objective relativism would demand that he make no such distinction, for to do so is to bifurcate number and thing. His perspective realism would tell him that it is space and time that the scientist is working with, and not just numbers or measurements (as distinguished from what is numbered or measured). It is important to avoid dualizing thing and the numbers or measurements of that thing so that the former is reality and the latter is what is known of that reality. We are justified in distinguishing in one sense between the world and what we know of that world. But whatever part of the world it is that we know, it is the world and not our measurements or operations (as distinguished from what is measured or operated on) that is present in our knowledge; i.e., what we know. This is the contribution of "immediatism" neo-realism made to objective relativism. (McGilvary also once noted that physicists have no need for "eyes" or "seeing" in their considerations, and will replace that with any physical object at which light arrives.¹⁸⁵ At another time

183. Ibid, p.371.

184. Ibid, p.374.

185. McGilvary, "Dialectical," p.422.

he noted the "epistemological middleheadedness of the popular expositors" of Relativity Theory, and the fact that physicists shared no unanimity as to the epistemological implications of their theory.¹⁸⁶⁾

Victor F. Lenzen also questioned the kind of import that was being given to Relativity Theory in its more popular expositions. He said at one point: "My first thesis is that the relativity theory of space and time is not metaphysical"; or, "physical relativism does not imply philosophical relativism."¹⁸⁷ He based this thesis not only on the fact that Relativity Theory seeks to avoid the relativity of measurement (by going beyond it) to obtain absolutes, but also because it is a physical theory and

in it no reference to mind is made. Philosophical relativism is concerned with the relation between mind and its objects. Physical relativism deals with the relation of objects to a reference system which is itself physical.¹⁸⁸

And when Relativity Theory speaks of its "observer," it speaks of the body of the observer--the physical observer. In other words, for Relativity Theory, the observer can be replaced by any physical object without requiring any change in its statements, for it is concerned actually with light arriving at points, etc. Lenzen concludes that instead of Relativity Theory influencing philosophy, "the theory itself has been influenced by philosophical considerations."¹⁸⁹

I have not attempted to state what precise influences were at work between objective relativism and Relativity Theory. Ushenko, e.g., has said that Einstein's theory was "an inspiring influence in the formation of

186. McGilvary, "Dualism," p.259.

187. Victor F. Lenzen, "The Philosophical Aspects of the Theory of Relativity," University of California Publications in Philosophy (Berkeley, 1923), IV, p.146

188. Ibid, p.147.

189. Ibid, pp.163-64

objective relativism."¹⁹⁰ And at another point he said that "relativity theory requires" the Whitehead doctrine of "projection of sense-data."¹⁹¹ Were I to commit myself on the matter, I would agree with Buchler:

For perhaps a century now a philosophic minority has begun to be less dismayed by the natural ultimacy of finitude, and has begun to discern the role of perspective as a natural condition of judgment. It is at least a possibility that this attitude has been fortified by recent developments in the sciences.¹⁹²

190. Ushenko, Events, p.208.

191. A. P. Ushenko, "A Note On Whitehead And Relativity," Journal Of Philosophy, 1950, XLVII, p.100.

192. Buchler, Judgment, p.128.

CHAPTER III

PERSPECTIVAL STATEMENTS OF OBJECTIVE RELATIVISM

In this chapter three perspectival statements of objective relativism will be set forth. Although I will be most concerned with the statement by E. B. McGilvary, I will also include extensive references to statements by A. P. Ushenko and Justus Buchler. The chapter will open with a comparison of perspectival objective relativism and the theory of appearance.

In the process of setting forth the perspectival approach to objective relativism, there will be occasion to compare it with the functional approach already presented. The comparison will specifically dwell on their respective treatments of the problem of memory and knowledge of the past.

From this there will emerge a possible correlation between the uses of the two meanings of "relativism" and the respective backgrounds out of which the perspectival and the contextual or functional objective relativisms developed. More important, there will emerge a distinct development of the two philosophies toward integration with their counterparts into a more fully elaborated objective relativism. It is then seen how the "subject-object" problem is dealt with in the more generalized terms of whole philosophical positions.

The chapter will therefore produce a clearer picture of the relativism in objective relativism, especially as it bears on the question of the loca-

tion of qualities or properties of things, plus some further considerations of the question of the cognitive and non-cognitive status of perception.

1. PERSPECTIVES AND APPEARANCES

I have already suggested that among the objective-relativist critiques there was the critique of the traditional reality-appearance distinction. It is a basic tenet of objective relativism that all appearances are equally real. And it was the notion that "reals" (or reality generally) have many different but equally valid perspectives that helped overcome the stigma attached to the fact that knowledge was perspectival, or rested on appearances. And it did so by showing that the world, nature itself, was perspectival and therefore our knowledge of that world has to be perspectival. In short, a new metaphysics was determining its theory of knowledge. Thus Professor Buchler says:

. . . we can certainly discard the assumption of a distinction between appearance and reality in favor of an assumption that the house really changes its properties in different perspectives . . . That is to say, under the conditions of backward movement on my part, it occupies less and less of a place in the visual field. At the same time it remains the same size in the perspective of physical measurement with respect to mass or shape. Not only are both judgments consistent; the qualifications introduced actually make it possible to predict one from the knowledge of the other.¹

The concept of appearance has often been associated with the notion of perspectives. A thing is said to appear in various perspectives. However, the language of appearance is generally superfluous in a statement of perspectives. Instead of speaking of a thing, or the world, having various appearances, it can be said to have various perspectives. In fact, it was an advantage to be able to avoid the language of appearance, for this lan-

1. Ibid., p.56.

guage was often associated with dualism and subjectivism.

Dewey carried his non-cognitive theory of perception over into his theory of appearance. Such terms as "looks," "seems," "sounds," he says, involve a relating to organic apparatus that refers to a causal condition of the production of the object which appears, and is not a reference to a knower; i.e., it is not an epistemological relation. Thus to say "the board looks straight," is to report a fact; to say "the board is straight," is to make an inference (perhaps wrongly) from what appears to the eye. "As actual existences all 'appearances' stand on the same level; as signs some are better than others . . ."²

In his study of the theory of appearing, Roderick M. Chisholm points out how the language of appearance was substituted for the language of "sense-data" to avoid many of the puzzles of the latter theory. Things are said to appear, or seem to be, or look in certain ways, instead of saying things present sense-data. This is what Ayer called the "language of appearing." In terms of it we speak only of the original external objects, not about data or any other such entities.³ By it we also seem to preserve the naive-realist position. Thus appearing designates a relation which obtains between object and organism. And Chisholm cites Murphy's statement to this effect.⁴

But it appears that Chisholm is reluctant to purge all concepts of "sense-data" from his thinking while dealing with the theory of appearing. Thus there is a tendency to equate "appearance" with subjectivistic dualism. Objective realtivists had said qualities or appearances are never in the organism, although they differed as to their exact location. Nonetheless,

2. John Dewey, "An Empirical Account Of Appearance," Journal Of Philosophy, 1927, XXIV, p.461.

3. Roderick M. Chisholm, "The Theory Of Appearing," in Max Black ed., Philosophical Analysis (Ithaca, 1950), p.105, 107.

4. Ibid, p. 108.

appearances were always considered to be the products of interaction between organism and environment. They were never dealt with in terms of sense-data. But Chisholm, and other critics, were often unable to disentangle this from a subjective dualism. Their use of "sense-data" in this connection tended to attribute the traits of that concept to the objective-relativist inclusion of the conditioning role of the organism or "subject." Thus objective relativism was said to continue the bifurcation of nature into a world of sense-data and of "things-in-themselves."⁵

This underlying disposition toward dualism is apparent when Chisholm compares the theory of appearance with dualism on the question of whether unperceived roses are red. Dualism, he says, holds they are red in the sense of having powers or dispositions to be red under certain conditions, or to produce sense-data under certain conditions. The theory of appearance says they have powers to appear red and do not appear red when unobserved. Murphy thus speaks of things "taking on" appearances or relations of appearing. Others (not specified) speak of sense-data emerging.⁶

Objective relativists do not think of "appearances" as anything like "sense-data." Although there may be some grounds for traditional subjectivistic conclusions in the confusions among objective relativists about just what is produced (and what produces it) in the case of secondary qualities, appearances, perspectives, etc., it is my contention that this is not a fully warranted conclusion. That Chisholm is influenced by such a confusion is apparent in the following reference to Murphy. Dualism, Chisholm says, maintains we perceive real objects through representatives or effects in us; the theory of appearance says we perceive external objects "the way they appear" under certain conditions. This view, he goes on to say, is often

5. Ibid, p.109.

6. Ibid, pp.109-10.

referred to as "objective relativism" by Murphy to stress the fact that the experienced world is often dependent on the organism and also is a direct presentation of the world itself. "'Objective Relativism' is here in question only to the extent that it may be correctly interpreted as a version of the theory of appearing."⁷

My point is that objective relativism is not the theory of appearing which Chisholm has in mind here. If there is any doubt that it is not, it is dispelled when Chisholm goes on to the question of objectivity. The theory of appearance, he says, holds that it is an objective property of a thing to appear as it does, but the property is "subjectively dependent" in its dependence upon an observer for the way it appears.⁸ The "subjectively dependent" here can only mean appearance is being interpreted in terms of the traditional dualistic distinction of subjective and objective--like the traditional notions of secondary qualities.

Actually the language of appearance is applied to objective relativism more by its critics than by its adherents. And, as I have demonstrated above, in applying it, they failed to see the extent of the objective-relativist critiques of certain traditional abstractions in philosophy, and so they "stacked the deck" against it at the outset. For the objective relativist, the notion of perspectives is a much more adequate notion than that of appearance.

7. Ibid, p.110 note. The reference to Murphy is to the article in which Murphy, so influenced by traditional notions of experience, finds it necessary to distinguish between the world as unexperienced and the world as experienced--even while admitting that objective relativism insists the world is directly present in experience. I have pointed out that Murphy's demand is, in reality, a demand for a non-perspectival world.

8. Ibid, p.110

2. THEORIES OF PERSPECTIVE

In spite of the confusions, the objective relativists quite uniformly maintained an objective reality of perspectives, a notion well stated in Woodbridge's essay:

Nature's perspectives are not deceptive; we live by them and rely on them . . .

. . . the visible world not only looks different from different points of view, but is. There is no privileged point of view in Nature . . . Absence of a privileged point of view and, consequently, of a privileged position may now be affirmed as characteristic of Nature, as an original principle of her structure or constitution.⁹

Perspectives, or points of view, are not only objective (in the sense that they are part of the very structure of nature), they are thereby unavoidable. This may be expressed in the language of realism and structure: perspectives are so characteristic of nature that our knowledge or experiencing of nature must thereby partake of such perspectivity; or it may be expressed in the more pragmatic, functional language of the radical-empiricist idiom: the "world is as it is experienced"; facts are

facts for somebody; they lie within some experience and get their meaning there. They are . . . correlations of data within perspectives. This is to say that it is necessary to note where, when, and how they are given . . . they have to be attained or determined in the context in which they are relevant.¹⁰

9. F. J. E. Woodbridge, An Essay On Nature (New York, 1940), pp.85-88.

10. Donald A. Piatt, "Mr. Montague On The Relativity Of Truth," Journal Of Philosophy, 1928, XXV, pp.324-25. The notion of a correlation of perspectives--the notion that truth and fact are relative to such a correlation, and that truth and fact change because "experience is a growth in which new data call for new correlations"--occurs often in connection with perspectives. Mead associates this correlation with the self, and identifies it with the ability to occupy different perspectives or viewpoints. G. H. Mead, The Philosophy Of The Present (Chicago & London, 1932), pp.82-3. Or, perspectives are said to "focus" in the organism, with nature or the world as a harmony of perspectives. Edwin A. Burt, "Real Vs. Abstract Evolution," in Edgar Sheffield Brightman, ed., Proceedings Of The 6th International Congress Of Philosophy (New York, 1927), p.174.

13

Buchler contrasted the unavoidability of perspectives with a tendency among philosophers and laymen

to think and speak as if perspective represented a special manifestation of knowing rather than as if knowing were an illustration of perspective. We speak, for instance, of either being 'immersed in events' or of 'seeing events in perspective.' We speak of the advantage which 'historical perspective' confers, as if perspective implied seeing from afar and as if it were not the very condition of seeing at all.¹¹

Perspectives are not only unavoidable, they are also pervasive; they operate in all judgment, perception and cognition, science and morality:

Every judgment . . . occurs within a perspective or, more generally, expresses a perspective . . .¹²

. . . a perspective is the essence of a judgment, the condition and the potentiality of its completion, rather than a psychological aspect of it or a historical circumstance explaining its occurrence . . . A perspective is as much part of the content and of the 'language' or material of a judgment as the so-called direct ingredients.¹³

Sometimes a distinction between perceptual and cognitive perspectives is drawn. Sometimes, however, such a distinction is not made, perhaps because perception is taken to be knowledge and thus the perspective of perception (which is at least partly a physical perspective) is automatically associated with that of cognition or knowledge. Then we encounter the problems attendant on the confusion of physical or scientific relativism with philosophical relativism.

But even Lovejoy noted the importance of the distinction, citing specifically statements by Mead and Murphy. In Mead, Lovejoy cannot ascertain whether, in saying sensuous qualities are there in nature but there in their relationship to "animal organisms," he means by this a re-

11. Buchler, Judgment, pp.128-29.

12. Ibid, p.129.

13. Ibid, p.113.

lationship to a "percipient event" such that mind or consciousness may be considered to be involved. This is, of course, the same problem encountered in the various uses of "relativism," and is why I have had to distinguish the two meanings of the term to display better the full meaning and unique contribution of objective relativism.

Lovejoy cites Murphy as once having said that sense-data are characters belonging to events in relation to a human body, and then later broadening that to include mind. Without such an inclusion of mind the matter remains entirely physical, Lovejoy rightly points out. And this, for him, means the "percipient event" is entirely physical.¹⁴ Lovejoy, however, fails to see that there could be a physical phase or function of the percipient event without thereby meaning the event is physical by nature. Like other critics, Lovejoy also claims that the objective relativist, when he attempts to account for the relativism of the "subject," is "saying what the dualist is saying."¹⁵

J. E. Boodin once made a statement of perspectives in which he distinguished "primary" and "secondary" perspectives. Primary perspectives are sense perspectives, events in nature altered only by our executive control over nature and never by perceiving itself. Secondary perspectives are our judgments and interpretations of nature, events in our personal history. They do not affect qualities of nature, but they do affect the significance and value of nature. Sense or primary perspectives are thus affected by the organism's personal, physiological history; secondary perspectives involve a type of duration not recognized in physical nature: "mnemic causation." The primary are independent of the secondary, but the

14. Lovejoy, Dualism, pp.102-3.

15. Ibid, p.103.

secondary presuppose the primary as data for interpretation, and have a certain independence. Truth and error are also located in the secondary perspective.¹⁶

The theories of error in the statements of perspective usually run along similar lines. Error consists in overlooking the fact of perspectivity and therefore a certain limit of our judgments. It is a limit, it should always be remembered, that is the result of the limited or perspectival character of the world, and not an inherent weakness of knowledge or judgment. Only when this is clearly seen can the agnostic or sceptical conclusions often drawn from the perspectivity of knowledge and truth be avoided. On these views, truth is usually pragmatic; justification of our inferences is discovered in the achievement of our interests or goals.

Marhenke's view is that one is in error

only when he abstracts from the standpoint relatively to which he perceives the object as possessing a given set of properties and assumes that the same object will have the same set of properties relatively to any other perceptual standpoint or independently of any such perceptual standpoint.¹⁷

In the case of purely delusory objects, objects that exist only for an individual, there would be error if "we believe that in these cases we are aware of a physical object. Such cases again are judgmental and arise when we abstract from the relation in which the perceived object exists."¹⁸

Dewey stated it in terms of context: the "most pervasive fallacy of philosophic thinking goes back to neglect of context." The result is "invariably some desiccation and atomizing of the world."¹⁹ The counterpart

16. John Elof Boodin, Cosmic Evolution; Outlines Of Cosmic Idealism (New York, 1925), pp.368 ff.

17. Marhenke, "Error," p.170.

18. Ibid, p.170.

19. Dewey, "Context," p.207.

fallacy is that of

unlimited extension or universalization. When context is taken into account, it is seen that every generalization occurs under limiting conditions set by the contextual situation. When this fact is passed over or thrown out of court, a principle valid under specifiable conditions is perforce extended without limit.²⁰

For all of them, error appears to be a matter of the judgments or inferences we make, meaning the responses or actions of the organism, instead of any reproductions or correspondences between knowledge and reality.

But there is another aspect of the theory of error that is found in a statement of perspectives. If such a statement is taken seriously, a certain amount of truth must be granted to all perspectives. Further, error or inadequacy is discovered in a perspective only by "occupying" or "taking" another perspective. This new perspective is thought of as "including" the older one in the sense that in seeing the older one to be in error, or inadequate, it sees not only what that perspective sees, but something more in addition. This superseding of one perspective by another is expressed by McGilvary:

In the perspective of early man the earth was at rest and everything else, sun, moon, stars, etc., moved with respect to it. In the perspective of Copernicus, it was the sun that was at rest and real motion of anything was motion relative to the sun. And in the perspective of present day physicists motion is altogether relative. There is no meaning in the assertion that anything is absolutely at rest, that is, at rest without reference to something else, etc. . . Now a perspectivist, to be thoroughgoing, should recognize that his perspectivism is itself relative not absolute.²¹

Or, as Piatt stated it: for the ancients it was a belief and a fact that the earth was flat; for us, it is not a fact and never was. "The difference is a difference of perspectives and of data."²²

20. Ibid, pp.208-9.

21. McGilvary, Realism, V, pp.47-8.

22. Piatt, "Truth," p.325.

136

Lenzen once noted that one of the characteristics of recent progress in physics is that new concepts and principles do not require giving up or rejecting the old; the earlier theories occur in the later as limiting cases:

This aspect of the development of physical thought seems to me to be best described by the Hegelian principle that the truth of the lower stages is preserved in that of the later stages of development.²³

Einstein and Infeld refer to this several times. Speaking of the new field theory in physics, for example:

The new theory shows the merits as well as the limitations of the old theory and allows us to regain our old concepts from a higher level. This is true not only for the theories of electric fluids and field, but for all changes in physical theories, however revolutionary they may seem.²⁴

The notion of the preservation of older theories as cases of newer theories, the whole concept of one perspective superseding another by means of including it, is distinctly characteristic of objective relativism. It can be readily traced in the history of objective relativism from neo-realists like Montague and Spaulding down to Lenzen, and Ushenko who once said

the fact that reality has many aspects is no more than a reminder to a philosopher that, to be adequate, a perspective must not be a view of one aspect to the exclusion of the others.²⁵

The origin of this approach is obviously in neo-realism; specifically, it is in its immediatism which said it was the world (or parts of the world)

23. Lenzen, "Relativity," p.158.

24. Einstein & Infeld, Physics, p.158.

25. Ushenko, Events, p.71.

that was directly present in perception and knowledge, and therefore no part of knowledge could be written off as unreal, or even, in a certain sense, wrong.

In Buchler's view a theory is "the formal definition of a perspective," and a problem is said to introduce "the need for a revised perspective within some area of the scientific domain."²⁶ Furthermore, perspectives are sharable. "Community of perspective is as essential for communication as common availability of objects."²⁷ But not all perspectives are held in common. Conflict of all kinds, as a matter of fact, is always a conflict of perspectives, although combatants "understand each other"--and thus presumably make a conflict possible in the first place--only as they share some perspective.²⁸ Perspectives not only can be shared, they also can be adopted. "Rationality" is defined as "the willingness to discover other perspectives, and to reconcile community with conviction."²⁹ But difference of perspective is as fundamental to communication, as is sharability: "A shared perspective is the means by which questions take form; cross-perspectives are the means by which answers are developed."³⁰

This is clearly in line with the statements of G. H. Mead on perspectives, one of the most notable being his paper "The Objective Reality Of Perspectives." Here he sets forth the sharability or community of perspectives in terms of society and the self--his theory of "taking the role of the other." Limitation of social organization is the inability of individuals to

26. Buchler, Judgment, p.71.

27. Ibid, pp.114-15.

28. Ibid, pp.115-16. Dewey once noted how important--and difficult--it is for a philosophy to be seen in its own perspective in order to criticize and understand it. Changes in perspective, he said, often involve carrying over the language of the older perspective, thereby creating a set of problems by itself. Dewey, Problems, pp.193-94.

29. Buchler, Judgment, p.116.

30. Ibid, p.118.

place themselves in the perspectives of others, to take their points of view . . . the individual enters into the perspectives of others, in so far as he is able to take their attitudes, or occupy their points of view.³¹

It is intelligibility that is the condition of the individual entering into perspectives of others and of the group.³² Note also that Mead claims it is experimental method that has afforded man the means whereby the individual perspective can become the perspective of the most universal community--that of thinking men. Our transformation formulae afford us a certain ease whereby the experience of other communities may be translated into that of our own. But no generation has been more uncertain as to what will be the common perspective of the next. Yet at no other time could man so readily determine the conditions, by transformation formulae, by which we can pass from one field to another, and of finding out how to conserve each. "The common perspective is comprehensibility, and comprehensibility is the statement in terms of common social conditions."³³

In Mead's statement there is a reflection of the new interpretation by objective relativism of objectivity and subjectivity. The objectivity of a perspective lies in the coincidence of the individual's perspective with that pattern of the whole act in which it is so involved thus making it possible for the organism to act.³⁴ But some perspectives cease to be objective when they are found not to agree with the common perspective (things like the Ptolemaic theory, hallucinations, etc.). This is not a surrender to a majority, but a development of another self. The perspectives thus become subjective. This rejection, plus the rise of new common minds and new common

31. G. H. Mead, "The Objective Reality Of Perspectives," in Brightman ed., Proceedings, p.78.

32. Ibid, p.78.

33. Ibid, p.79.

34. Ibid, p.84.

perspectives, is an instance of organization of perspectives in nature; of the "creative advance of nature." Mind is such an organization and part of this creative advance.³⁵

Among these writers there is also the concept of philosophical perspectives, and the problem of sharing them:

Philosophic perspectives, even where they fail to overlap and intersect, attempt to achieve universality. In philosophy the individuality of an idiom is likely to be greater than that of the subject matter it manipulates. The philosopher, then, in formulating his categories and principles, represents a world that is always to some extent available to other perspectives. But inevitably he goes further than this. In shaping his structure he presumes to represent other perspectives than his own. He is not simply reporting his impressions but making a tacit recommendation that his results fit other perspectives and that in some sense they are juster to these perspectives than the formulation which others design for them. In the very framing of his philosophic structure, therefore, the philosopher already incorporates a principle of criticism. . . . We can demand of philosophy, if not of art, that it be better than it is, however good it may be. We can demand of a perspective, not that it translate itself into our own perspective, but that it be significant enough for us to desire the translation and to approximate it in reflexive query.³⁶

For Ushenko, philosophical perspectives differ ultimately in the choice of categories, which is itself "determined by the critic's own philosophical perspective."³⁷ And such a view was quite fundamental to McGilvary's perspective realism:

. . . this perspectivist view . . . recognizes that other views, even opposing views, are tenable from the respective points of view of those who hold them . . . different people have different fundamental assumptions. Since perspective realism in the form in which I am presenting it is based upon the assumption that there is a physical world and that parts of the physical world actually appear normally in the sense, memory, perception and intellectual theorizings of the perspectivist he also recognizes that other intelligent human beings starting from dif-

35. Ibid, p.83. This by no means exhausts Mead's theory of perspectives. Its many suggestive, seminal insights are well worth the study, but are included here only to the extent that they bear upon my thesis.

36. Buchler, Judgment, p.132,134.

37. Ushenko, Events, p.297.

ferent assumptions may also have intelligent views different from his own. And when the fundamental assumptions of various thinkers are different there is no known method by which any one of these thinkers can prove to any other that the other's fundamental conceptions are untenable.³⁸

Perspectives are said to be spatial and temporal. Thus McGilvary writes about "perceptual and memory perspectives." And Randall talks of the "envisaged past" (the present and the future operating in the present that creates the past and makes history), and the "envisaged future" (the future that can be predicted from our present). These are "perspectives from our present, arrived at by analysis of that present, and then used in turn to illuminate it."³⁹

A dualist (like the critical realist with his notion of essences) could cope with the problem of the multitude of varying appearances or properties of a thing without bringing into question his presupposition of an antecedent reality that must be reported in knowledge, and that was fixed and non-contradictory. All of the variations centered about the essences or sense-data, not around the existent thing. However, the perspectivist or objective relativist, strongly influenced by the naive-realist concepts of direct perception and knowledge, rejected this notion. This is summed up by Ushenko in a presentation of his version of objective relativism:

The immediate objection, that percepts cannot be identified with the surface of a thing because they vary in shape and size with the change in the percipient's position, may and must be answered, in agreement with a form of direct realism which is sometimes called 'objective relativism,' by pointing out that shape and size are relative or perspective properties. A further objection, that the perspective relativity of size and shape does away with the physical surface as a uniquely determined and exclusive boundary of a material thing, and therefore renders the common sense notion of things indefinite, is un-

38. McGilvary, Realism, V, p.49. My emphasis.

39. Randall, "Philosophy," p.463.

answerable; but it means no more than a realization that the common sense treatment is at best an approximation.⁴⁰

At this time Ushenko had two principal criticisms of the objective-relativist notion of perspectives. One of them had to do with its failure to extend perspectivism to allow for temporal perspectivity; for "the existence of alternative and relative dates."

According to my theory the same physical source has alternative dates associated with alternative manifestations, and a distant observer can pick out only one manifestation, the one that has the same date as the corresponding act of perception. Thus an observer always perceives a present datum, although the physical source actualized in his present percept may have had earlier and already past manifestations.⁴¹

The objective relativists refused to identify any one perspectival size as the size of the source--except by convention; so too they should refuse to identify any one perspectival date as the date of the source--except by convention.⁴²

Ushenko's second criticism was that, in another case, the objective relativist goes too far in his perspectivism; he goes too far when he concludes that "all properties of an object are relative."⁴³ Ushenko's criticism is that some invariance is required to make agreement possible:

. . . if neither space nor time are sufficient as means of objective identification, there must be an intrinsic property which is invariant through various spatial and temporal determinations by different observers and yet is the sole ground for the derivation of these determinations . . . Although neutral among perspective appearances, the intrinsic property of an object must be their generative source.⁴⁴

40. Ushenko, Events, pp.204-5.

41. Ibid, pp.208-10.

42. Ibid, p.211.

43. Ibid, p.212. It will be recalled that McGilvary disagreed with Dewey on this same point. McGilvary insisted that all properties are relative--what Ushenko is denying here.

44. Ibid, p.213.

The problem of an intrinsic, non-relative property--this uneasiness in the presence of the sheer relativism possible on this view--is for Ushenko and others the problem of objective relativism. As he put it: Can the observer or inhabitant at a particular perspective or station know or infer, on such a view, the existence of the common external world? And if so, can he know that the common world is of some particular character? And how would he explain the relation between his perspective and the common world?⁴⁵

The answer for Ushenko lies in treating this common world as a power to acquire alternative properties in relation to different points of view:

The opposition between power and actuality is the distinction between an objective situation and the corresponding percepts in alternative perspectives. The associated theory of perception is a version of objective relativism, according to which percepts are perspective manifestations through which the perceptible situation can be actualized.⁴⁶

It is clear for Ushenko that to cling to a notion of an exclusive objective property is to stay with a traditional representative theory in which alternative properties are taken to be distortions. But with the notion of the "public region" as a power (with the antecedent reality now viewed as a process) these properties can be attributed to the same object

as its original, even though relative, aspects. Accordingly, let us accept a version of objective relativism which does not locate perspectives at the corresponding standpoints but at the object of perception. This version of objective relativism is to some extent similar to the so-called selective theory of perception because both theories place perceivable qualities . . . at--or in--the object. But selective realism would have perceivable qualities in the object absolutely . . . so that all that a percipient does is select among the antecedently existing qualities his percept. On the other hand, objective relativism asserts that perceivable qualities are in the object not absolutely but in perspective, i.e., in relation to such conditions of perception as the occupation of a unique standpoint: a perceptible quality is in the object of perception but only from the corresponding standpoint.⁴⁷

45. Ibid., p.280.

46. Ibid., p.279.

47. Ibid., p.282 my emphasis.

Thus Ushenko answers the question of location by placing everything at "the object of perception." And it is clear that he is seeking both structure and process for his objective relativism.

Ushenko extends his theory of perspectives to include the possibility of geometrical or "regional" properties, as well as "material" properties. A geometrical property is one which "can be modified by the occupation of a different standpoint alone; any other property is material."⁴⁸ He has extended his perspectivism from the physical to the non-physical, to include not only perception but cognition as well. The "percipient's station" is thus

Anything which conditions either a regional or a material property, whether it is the occupation of a standpoint or a physical, physiological, or psychological complex . . . But the properties thus conditioned are not subjective representations; they are relative but original properties of the object itself.⁴⁹

And Ushenko is quite aware that he is extending his concept of perspectives beyond the merely physical:

. . . the range of the perspective theory is extended beyond sensory perception to the fields of imaginative composition and conceptualization, to art, science, and philosophy. Extension to art does not raise a new difficulty because the full import of an artistic truth is a function of its total context . . .⁵⁰

A similar approach is taken by McGilvary in speaking of his perspective realism:

What differentiates more than anything else my perspective realism is the view of consciousness as an epiphysical relation whose occurrence depends upon nerve activity. Just as in sense and sense perception and memory, physical objects and events appear to us in perspective so do they appear to us also in intellectual perspectives and moral perspectives and aesthetic perspectives. In none of these cases does the physical object appear to us as it is by itself for as we've seen . . . there are no things by themselves; they're all things in relation and

48. Ibid, p.286.

49. Ibid, p.286.

50. Ibid, pp.294-95.

the characters that things have vary in some certain respects according to the different relations of which they are terms . . .⁵¹

Ushenko notes that the concept of "theoretical perspectives" lacks the clarity of the idea of perceptual perspectives, and that this accounts for the problems in the theory of "perspective truth."

We understand what we mean by a 'point of view,' in a literal sense of a position in space and time, but our meaning of the term 'conceptual standpoint,' of a set of basic concepts which determine a unique theoretical perspective, is in part a question of the philosophy of concepts and also a linguistic proposal. I expect agreement only with the following general considerations. Whereas points of view, and the corresponding perceptual perspectives, change from one individual to another, a conceptual standpoint represents the mentality of a culture.⁵²

The problem of reconciling modern science and common sense, is a problem of different perspectives:

The perspective of classical physics conforms to perceptual differentiation between space and time. The perspective of relativity, on the other hand, requires the concept of a four-dimensional space-time which cannot be perceptually exemplified. The perspective of quantum physics is even more 'inhuman.'⁵³

3. PERSPECTIVES AND PERCEPTION

At this time Ushenko explicitly accepted the objective-relativist version of perception in preference to Whitehead's version. Two crucial examples by which he compared the respective theories was that of seeing the image of a green leaf in a mirror, and that of an astronomer observing an explosion on the sun. Both examples fit in with Whitehead's theory, he admitted. The Objective Relativist's version of the astronomer example is in terms of the conception of multiple dates, while mirror images and double

51. McGilvary, Realism, V, pp.47-8.

52. Ushenko, Events, pp.296-97.

53. Ibid, p.297.

images "form an exception to the principle of objective relativism." An "ambiguity in Whitehead's account of the mirror image," however, kept Ushenko from deciding in his favor.⁵⁴

But the issue between the objective relativist and Whitehead, Ushenko says, is one of

general theoretical plausibility which cannot be decided on the score of a singular type of perceptual evidence. The issue is essentially a question of veridical perception. To an objective relativist every quality, which appears in veridical perception, belongs to the present datum, whereas, according to Whitehead, material properties only appear to belong to the presented region and are, in reality, remnants of a past event. In my opinion, the notion of the past which actually intrudes into the present and, therefore, is present signifies a confusion of thought.⁵⁵

We have here the same problem as that between Lovejoy and Dewey: What is past about our knowledge of the past? Earlier Ushenko had described Whitehead's theory as a compromise between the representative and presentative theories (identifying McGilvary with the latter). Whitehead's theory holds that while the contemporary regions of space are given to the percipient in the original, the physical processes going on in these regions are given by representation and at a later date. As still another alternative, although it is an admitted version of the presentative theory, Ushenko offered his concept of multiple dates.⁵⁶

But in the time between 1946 and 1950 Ushenko comes to an opposite conclusion. Now he finds Whitehead's theory of perception "fully justified on the grounds of the theory of relativity," and further, "no other general treatment of visual perception agrees with the concept of physical space-time."⁵⁷ Here we are told what the problem is in the example of observing

54. Ibid, p.287.

55. Ibid, p.288.

56. A. P. Ushenko, The Philosophy Of Relativity (London, 1937), pp.72-5.

57. Ushenko, "A Note," p.100.

a green leaf in a mirror. Ushenko holds (with Whitehead) that in observing anything in a mirror we look upon the image as located behind the mirror. The possibility of there being something entirely different occupying this place, however,

allows one to say that the sense-datum is projected by the percipient upon the region of its manifestation. In other words, while the percept is just where it appears to be in the physical space of the percipient's frame of reference, the sensory contents that appear there are derived from some past occurrence.⁵⁸

Whitehead had said that if we are observing a nebula 1,000 light-years away, we are not looking backward through that many years. This indicates

Whitehead's disagreement with such objective relativists as E. B. McGilvary. These objective relativists are the only philosophers of realism who share with Whitehead and common sense the notion that we can perceive directly data which are located outside our bodies. But, contrary to Whitehead and common sense, they propound the paradox that we also can stare directly into the past. An objective relativist is likely to retort that Whitehead avoids the paradox at the price of his questionable doctrine of projection of sense-data. The answer to the objective relativist is that the doctrine . . . is just what the theory of relativity requires.⁵⁹

It is apparent here that Ushenko and Whitehead interpret perception as a case of knowledge. Whitehead, for example, said "Perception is simply the cognition of prehensive unification; or more shortly, perception is cognition of prehension."⁶⁰ This, if nothing else, could set off Whitehead from a consistent objective relativism, for any cognitive theory of perception

58. Ibid, p.100.

59. Ibid, p.100. At this point Ushenko appeals to Weyl's account of space-time as an aid to an analysis of the perceptual situation. That is, he draws epistemological or philosophical conclusions from the account. However, there is reason to believe that Ushenko is drawing the kind of conclusions from Relativity Theory that we have already found to be unwarranted. It is also to be questioned whether Weyl himself drew such conclusions. Furthermore, there is the question of how Ushenko can reconcile Whitehead's naive realism with the Kantian Idealism in Weyl's work which Weyl explicitly offered as a means of overcoming naive realism. Hermann Weyl, Mind And Nature (Philadelphia, 1934), p.21.

60. Whitehead, Science, p.73.

ultimately comes out with a dualism on its hands. As for the image of the green leaf in the mirror, it is questionable whether we do as a rule take the leaf to be located behind the mirror as Whitehead claims. Although this might be the case of a person first encountering mirrors, it is hardly a point upon which to decide between alternative theories of perception. In fact, it appears that Ushenko had to find new support in Relativity Theory for Whitehead's theory before he would take this example as proof of the Whitehead theory and disproof of the objective-relativist theory. Only if we are total strangers to mirrors, or are not aware in the first place that we are looking into a mirror, do we take the image in the mirror to be located behind it. Then we think we are looking directly at the thing. But does not this emphasize the role our "takings," responses, or inferences play? In which case, it is our knowledge and not our perceptions alone that tells us the green leaf is behind the mirror. And this bears out the objective-relativist interpretation of perception as non-cognitive.

Whether or not perception is taken to be a case of knowledge can be a critical question for a would-be objective relativism. The neo-realist principle of direct knowledge and perception holds that the world is directly present in perception and, with the addition of the relative, directly present in knowledge. This principle is fundamental to objective relativism. Any notion of perspectives, for example, stands or falls with it. However, the principle is untenable if perception is taken to be a case of knowledge because this brings the relative or subjective into the picture, and to the extent that is done without further re-definition of these concepts, the notion that it is the world directly present must give way and some form of dualism, representation, or projection takes its place. The traditional interpretation takes the presence of the subjective to be an injection of

error, illusion, hallucination or non-objectivity. And this is ex hypothesi antithetical to objectivity or the possibility of a direct presence of the world in knowledge. The neo-realist principle is then qualified, and illusion and error now become products of the "subject" or mind, and not really a part of the physical order of nature at all. If, however, subjective and objective are re-defined along objective-relativist lines, the problem of whether perception is cognitive or non-cognitive becomes no problem at all. The distinction is functional only. But one's theory of perception now rests on a more fundamental, metaphysical basis.

The objective relativist takes perceptions to be perfectly natural organic relations between organism and environment which can be taken up into knowledge by deliberately putting what is directly present in perception to such use by the organism. That is, the organism responds to them, taking them to be such and such, inferring from them, even manipulating them. In addition to avoiding the highly problematic devices of "data" and "projections," the objective relativist is able to maintain that our knowledge is of the world (and not mediated by means of essences, data or projections).

To say that the leaf "appears" or "seems" or "looks" to be behind the mirror is to report a perception, a fact. To say that it is behind the mirror is to make an inference, to respond in some manner of overt behavior. Then, and only then, does knowledge occur. Error can not be located in perception alone, although it is done so by Whitehead and a great many others. They do it by overlooking how much knowledge they actually use in the process of judging a perception to be wrong. For example, it is said to be wrong for us to perceive the leaf to be behind the mirror. Why? Because it is not there but rather behind you, and you are seeing it in a mirror. Does the perception tell us that? No. Well, where does it come from, how do we find that out? We perceivers would find it out by inferring or acting upon

the perception and then discovering it not to be true that the leaf is behind the mirror. In the case of the theorist who is judging the perception to be in error, he knows the leaf to be behind the perceiver, and he knows the perceiver is looking into a mirror. With such knowledge present, error is detectable; but not in perception alone.

Experiments in perception are often reported in this manner. The subject percipient is put into various situations in which he reports what he sees. The experimenter knows more about these situations than the subject. He knows, for example, that because of the different ways in which the same object is placed before the subject, the subject makes reports of different objects. But if the experimenter concludes that the subject erred, distorted, projected or attributed something that was not there, then the experimenter has failed to see that in order to say that he has to call upon his previous knowledge. The subject does not have such previous knowledge, hence his perception is not wrong--it is precisely what he should perceive. His response (i.e., knowledge) is wrong. But note how it still requires the experimenter's perspective, or knowledge equivalent to it, in order to judge the response wrong.

But it might be argued that perception could be taken to be a case of knowledge after subjectivity had been so re-defined that it no longer is incompatible with objectivity, and hence its introduction into perception in no way threatens the principle of direct knowledge. This is entirely possible, of course, but it must be seen that under such conditions perception is being viewed in its cognitive function; and, further, that its perceptual function must also be distinguished. In terms of the perspectival objective relativist, perception has a perceptual (or physical) perspective, and a cognitive (or epiphsical) perspective. Corresponding to these perspectives are the two meanings of "relativism": Rel.1 and Rel.2.

4. E. B. MCGILVARY'S PERSPECTIVE REALISM

Much of what I have dealt with in this chapter and a great deal of what I have been attempting to sum up as the spirit and meaning of objective relativism, is included by the late Professor E. B. McGilvary in the introduction to his Toward A Perspective Realism:

Every philosophy is the universe as it appears in the perspective of a philosopher. It is a Weltangeschaut and not die Welt an und fur sich . . . The perspective realist makes no claim that he can speak for the universe as it is for itself. He does not consider himself as an outsider looking on . . . On the contrary, he is a natural organism responding to natural stimulations and acquiring thereby such knowledge as nature thereupon puts at his disposal . . . A mature philosophy for him is an ideal never realized. He sees in part, he knows in part, he prophesies in part; and that which is perfect never comes, except as a goal that lies far off before him.⁶¹

The emphasis is on the "perspective" in his perspective realism, the "realism" reflects "the keeping of a realistic residue."⁶² The name "perspectivity" would do as well, and neither realist nor idealist can claim a monopoly of that. It is

a philosophical theory that regards every experience, including the experience of a philosophical theory, as the real objective world appearing in the perspective of an experiencing organism.⁶³

Thus McGilvary's first postulate is the postulate of naive or direct realism--the immediatism of neo-realism: "In our sense experience there is presented to us in part the real world in which we all in common live and move and have our being."⁶⁴ He does not say what the "in part" refers to. It could be that he is pointing to something presented in "our sense experience" that is not the "real world." On the other hand, it could refer only to

61. McGilvary, Realism, I, p.1.

62. Ibid, I, p.3.

63. Ibid, I, p.7.

64. Ibid, I, p.16.

the fact that there can be present in sense experience something not a part of the "real world in which we all in common live and move and have our being."

He sheds some light on the ambiguity with a later statement:

The bank of the river of common sense on which the perspectivist chooses to land in starting his work of philosophical construction is the conviction that the world lying before him in sense experiences is the real world. What he sees, handles, feels, and remembers, is 'the real thing,' and he himself is a part of the real thing. All this not in the sense that it is the whole of the real thing, but that it is the paradigm and prototype of whatever more there is of reality. That there is more is evidenced to him by the fact that each day brings him more of it, to be seen, handled, felt, and otherwise dealt with as best he can.⁶⁵

McGilvary is quite explicit that perspectivity does not limit perspectives to the physical alone:

The perspectivist . . . finds it necessary to assume that in perception there is something more than physical processes--something vectorial, of course, but with its vector opposite in direction to that of the physical vector involved, and yet not dynamically opposed. The only kind of thing that he can conceive of as having these requisites is an asymmetrical nondynamic relation. Being asymmetrical it is vectorial; being non-dynamic it is not dynamically opposed to the physical vector. 'Consciousness' as we have defined it conforms to these specifications. It has . . . a non-dynamic relation of a specific sort in its connotation.⁶⁶

That there is this "something more" than the physical in mind or consciousness (what must be taken account of in philosophical relativism, and what distinguishes it from physical or scientific relativism), is the basis for McGilvary's "epidynamism":

The epidynamicist cannot stress too strongly or too frequently that for him memory and mind involve a factor which shows itself to be non-dynamic in that it temporally over-reaches what anything dynamic can do at the time . . . This temporal overreaching is mind's 'transcendence' of the dynamic--a transcendence which is epidynamic in that the mind which in its conscious reach transcends the dynamic is at the same time a dynamic organism.⁶⁷

65. Ibid, I, p.13.

66. Ibid, III, pp.45-6.

67. Ibid, III, pp.48-9.

The transcendence of the dynamic by the epiphysical character of mind or consciousness can be compared to the dimension beyond the present that distinguishes a process from an event. Notice also how the epiphysical element is required for any significant transcendence of the present (both forward and backward). The fact that the epiphysical element is needed will demonstrate how such a thing as knowledge of the past clearly involves a relativism like Rel.2.

The "something more"--the epiphysical or epidynamical aspect of nature--is "dynamically 'irrelevant.'" The "dynamical order" is the subject-matter of science, and this order is closed or "indifferent" to the non or epidynamic.

This indifference is by abstraction. This is to say that the presence of the non-dynamic factors is ignored--and ignored without prejudice to the relation of either kind concerned.⁶⁸

This is the distinction I have made between the subject-matter of science and the subject-matter of philosophy, and therefore between scientific relativism and philosophical relativism. It is interesting to note that McGilvary's epidynamism differs from traditional epi-pehnomenalism in that mind is not impotent to control matter.⁶⁹ Also, McGilvary calls the evolutionary appearance of mind or the epidynamic an "innovative evolution" to stress the novelty, the "something the like of which has never occurred before," that it represents.⁷⁰ But this evolution

shows no fundamental departure, since in an organism, when by innovation it becomes a mind, the same kind of chemical and physical processes still occur, uninfluenced dynamically by the innovation . . . There is no departure from chemistry and physics; but there is addition to chemistry and physics. The addition . . . is . . . one that naturally occurs in the orderly process of nature . . . nature's own multiplication.⁷¹

Thus McGilvary can also say that "if there were no consciousness in the world,

68. Ibid, III, pp.16-7.

69. Ibid, III, p.21.

70. Ibid, III, p.25.

71. Ibid, III, p.26.

the dynamical course of nature would not run precisely as it does in our actual world in which there is consciousness."⁷²

On such a view, the world of scientific objects is not a world indifferent to human interests because wholly apart from experience. For the epistemic dynamicist it

is not disconnected from 'the affairs of primary experience'; neither is it 'fixed and final.' It is a world of things dynamically going on, of which he himself is one . . .⁷³

In his article on perceptual and memory perspectives, McGilvary pointed out that an astronomer dates an eclipse by the arrival of the light at his point on earth. Following that example, McGilvary would "conventionally date the perspective by its temporal station-point."⁷⁴ But this is not to overlook the physical time-relations in the perspective, nor is it meant to say that the present perspective cannot actually include physically past events. In addition to the spatio-temporal perspectives of vision, there are the perspectives of memory. Here he points out that "Just as a perceptual perspective includes what was physically past, so a memory perspective includes what was perceptually past."⁷⁵ A theory that the real event is in two temporal perspectives, first an earlier perceptual perspective, and then a later memory perspective, accounts for the difference in time and in character of what is in the memory experience from the real event. Just as a cube has different characters in different spatial perspectives, so too has an event.⁷⁶ Retrospectivity is a particular kind of perspectivity.⁷⁷

72. Ibid, III, p.29 romanized.

73. Ibid, III, p.49.

74. McGilvary, "Perspectives," p.323.

75. Ibid, pp.323-24 my emphasis.

76. Ibid, p.324.

77. McGilvary, "Dualism," p.253.

McGilvary showed how his theory would apply to the popular example of a solar eclipse. In the physical perspective of the eclipse, the sun in that perspective is not the sun physically simultaneous with the man in that perspective, nor with its station-point. The perspective includes what is not physically simultaneous. But "includes" is a present tense form, and the inclusion is not a physically present inclusion in the temporal sense of "present."⁷⁸ This use of "includes" should be taken like our use of "are" in "All men are mortal;" i.e., we do not mean to restrict the "are" to just living men. In the same way, the use of "includes" in the case of perceptions of things that have taken place some minutes (or years) earlier is to be qualified so as not to be limited to the temporal present.

Such a qualification becomes more important for McGilvary in the case of memory perspectives. Here the need for a tenseless form of the verb "to be present" is more acute. For a memory perspective includes not only sensibly present objects or events, but also past objects and events. In the case of perceiving an eclipse, everything included in the perspective is sensibly present; whereas, in memory some part is sensibly present and some is not. A perceptual and a memory perspective are actually involved.

. . . in a memory perspective a past event comes to have been what we remember it as having been; and what it comes to have been, it was. But this does not necessarily mean that it was in the contemporary perceptual perspective what it was in the memory perspective.⁷⁹

Thus while eating breakfast this morning my breakfast table had certain characteristics (perceptual perspective), and in my memory experience it likewise had certain characteristics (memory perspective). And these characteristics need not have been identical:

78. McGilvary, "Perspectives," p.326.

79. Ibid., p.326.

But both were characters of my past breakfast table, one in one perspective and the other in another perspective . . . no perspective transcends itself; the memory experience does not transcend itself, but it transcends the date of its station-point.⁸⁰

It seems to me that McGilvary is seeking to account for the presence of two different things in a perspective of either the memory type, or of the type in which we are perceiving something that occurred sometime prior to the perception of it. In the first place, there is the fact that we are perceiving right now; in the second place, there is the pastness of what we are perceiving. The question is whether in the process he has said that the past somehow intrudes into the present; that in these cases we somehow look into the past, as Ushenko claimed McGilvary and other objective relativists had said. These always were the criticisms of the objective-relativist view of knowledge or perception that had any pastness to it. For the objective relativist claimed that our knowledge was always direct; whatever was its object was directly present. His critic wondered how the past could be directly present. McGilvary's solution to the problem is in broadening the meaning of "includes" in saying a perspective "includes what was physically past." Such inclusion does not mean the past is literally present. Thus "present" is not limited to the temporal present.

In his exchange with Lovejoy, Dewey dealt with this problem in terms of present consequences of past events. In the present, he said, there are consequences of past events--a "past-event-having-a-connection-into-the-present-and-future," as he termed it. Or, it is a "representation of not-present existents by present data."

The difference between the two statements led McGilvary, for one, to believe there was a substantial difference between them. He maintained that

80. Ibid, p.326.

Dewey and Lovejoy were guilty of a common assumption: "both assume a 'present' memory is ontologically confined to the present."⁸¹ And Dewey goes on from this to deny knowledge of the past, and Lovejoy to hold a representative theory.⁸² To say that Dewey denied knowledge of the past is misleading, however (and "representation" is not quite the proper term for Lovejoy). Dewey said that "so far as the meaning is wholly of and in the past, it cannot be recovered for knowledge."⁸³ And

. . . thoughts about the past hang upon present observable events and are verified by future predicted or anticipated events which are capable of entering into direct presentation.⁸⁴

The question is: What are we to take McGilvary to mean by "ontologically confined to the present"? If it means "existentially confined," there is no doubt that memory is not so confined to the present. As I pointed out above, there is the fact of memory or remembering occurring in the present, and there is what it is a memory of. The latter is manifestly not of the present. McGilvary interprets both Dewey and Lovejoy as denying that this latter factor was a part of memory. Actually the problem for both of them, like the problem for McGilvary, is to determine the precise nature of the pastness in our knowledge of the past; it is not a question of whether or not there is any pastness in it. It would seem that the very reference to it as "knowledge of the past" commits one to holding some pastness of some sort is involved.

Thus we have three answers to the problem. For Dewey the pastness

81. McGilvary, "Perspectives," p.327 note. 82. Ibid, p.327 note.

83. Dewey, "Dualism," p.311. 84. Ibid, p.316.

15

is present "consequences" of past events. For McGilvary it is the past "included" in the present perspective in the sense that an event has, as a part of its perspective, an extension beyond its own time and place. For Lovejoy essences or data which "belong" to an event "represent" it in the present. I cannot see--apart from the language differences and the differences those might entail--how these three theories substantially contradict one another.

As a matter of fact, McGilvary noted later that he agreed with Dewey's statement that "things can be presented as absent"; the "be presented" having the same meaning for McGilvary as "be present."

Now by the same token I maintain that things can be present as past or as future and in either or both cases they can be thus present at the same time at which other things are present as present . . . When Dewey said that 'things can be presented as absent' and when I say that things can be present as past or future the words 'be presented,' or 'be present' are synonymous with the word 'appear.'⁸⁵

And he cites Dewey's paper on appearance as the view he has himself adopted, and as "one of the most important metaphysical achievements of Dewey."⁸⁶

However, this was the occasion for another problem. For McGilvary, consciousness is "the converse of the additive relation of appearance," and it is also something more than just physical--it is epiphenomenal. But it was Dewey's contention that appearance does not denote a total or pervasive character, or intrinsic quality,

but a relation which is additive . . . a presentation marks the existence of a thing in relation to an organism . . .

This relation is physical, existential, not epistemic. Its establishment is, indeed, a necessary condition of knowing, but it does not constitute knowledge . . . either as something known or as something to be known . . . In short, while the appearance is a recondition [sic]

85. McGilvary, Realism, V, p.41c.

86. Ibid, V, p.41d.

130

of knowing, it is not a case of knowing . . .⁸⁷

McGilvary was quite aware of the fact that he was interpreting Dewey's theory of appearance (as physical only) as something more than physical or existential. He is led to make this interpretation after citing this quotation from Dewey:

Furthermore, we must note that the relation which determines the thing to appear is definite, specifiable, not wholesale. A table disappears--not absolutely, but with respect to sight; when the eyes close, it may still be present to the hand. Failure to bear in mind the definite character of the organic relation that conditions an appearance is largely responsible for treating it as if it involved a unique problem.⁸⁸

To which McGilvary replied:

. . . the physical 'organic relation that conditions an appearance' is not and cannot be the additive relation of appearing which it determines. 'Failure to bear in mind' that appearance, an additive relation, is additive in that it is other than the physical processes that bring it about, 'is responsible for' not 'treating it as if it involves a unique problem'⁸⁹ 'unique' in the sense that appearance is not a physical problem.

In other words, Dewey said that appearance is "a relation which is additive." Then he spoke of "the relation which determines a thing to appear"; of the "organic relation that conditions an appearance." McGilvary wondered:

. . . is there only one relation occurring when a table comes into my view, only the physical relation we mentioned a moment ago?

Can a physical relation determine itself or condition itself?⁹⁰

The Dewey statement is obviously ambiguous. But he may not always have been talking about the same relation. Considering Dewey's desire to establish a non-cognitive theory of perception--which would mean a non-cognitive theory of

87. Dewey, "Appearance," pp.450-1.

88. Ibid, p.451 quoted McGilvary, Realism, IV, p.22.

89. McGilvary, Realism, IV, pp.22. 90. Ibid, IV, pp.21-2.

appearance--we would be justified in some such conclusion. For, the conclusion McGilvary draws from his interpretation of Dewey is definitely a cognitive theory of appearance.

McGilvary continued his study of Dewey's theory in connection with his Experience And Nature. In speaking of the relation of "subject" and "object," Dewey noted that the "moot problem" is the problem of "what consequences follow in and for primary experience from the distinction of the physical and the psychological or mental from each other."⁹¹ Where, McGilvary now asked, is "appearance"? Nothing is here said about the fact that

the object appears to the subject, and that appearing is a relation which is additive to and conditioned by the physical. This has dropped entirely out of sight and out of mind.⁹²

McGilvary followed this up with a statement of his own views on the "subject-object" relation which suggest that he was taking perception (or appearance) as a case of knowledge:

Here we have the objective and the subjective, but nothing is said of any additive relation of appearing in which the objective stands to the subjective. The subjective consists solely, so far as the present account goes, of the administration and transformation of the objective through 'the purposes and plans, the desires and emotions.' This ignoring of the relation of appearing with its converse . . . [which] the perspectivist calls . . . the conscious relation--is responsible for what Mr. Dewey says of 'the moot problem of the relation of subject and object' as it concerns experience. Once recognize this relation, and the object is what appears, the subject is that to which the object appears, and the relation of object to subject is the relation of appearing. Or conversely stated . . . the relation of subject to object is the conscious relation.⁹³

Dewey had said that any theory that took perception (or appearance) to be a case of knowledge must maintain the "ubiquity of the knowledge relation";

91. Dewey, Nature, 2nd ed., p.10, quoted McGilvary, Realism, IV, p.25.

92. McGilvary, Realism, IV, p.25.

93. Ibid, IV, p.26 last emphasis mine.

that is, the knowledge relation is the one and only relation between "subject" and "object." And being the one and only relation it loses all distinctiveness and becomes meaningless. McGilvary appears to come out with the same problem: "The relation of object to subject is the relation of appearing," and the relation of appearing is an epistemic relation; at least it is epiphsical. Hence the relation of appearing is ubiquitous, and the knowledge relation is the only relation between "subject" and "object."

There is, however, one important qualification. The conscious or appearance relation is epiphsical. That means it is physical and something more than physical. The non-cognitive theory of perception, however, was a critique against theories that dualized the "subject-object" relation between epistemic and physical or organic. Thus McGilvary's broadened concept of the conscious relation might avoid the critique because, first and foremost, it does include the physical and hence is not a dualism of physical and epiphsical. It would be important to bear this in mind when the theory is utilized for a theory of perception and knowledge. Among other things, it would enable the postulate of direct or naive (or neo-) realism to be consistently maintained.

As I have indicated, between the time of the paper in which he criticized Dewey and Lovejoy and his Carus Lectures, McGilvary came to see more agreement between himself and Dewey than before. However, even at the time of his paper, McGilvary demonstrated a close affinity with Dewey. But in considering Mead's theory of the present--which, for McGilvary, was a development of Dewey into a theory of the past made out of the materials of the present--McGilvary was sharply critical. Mead, he said, nowhere goes beyond the position

that a perspective is in the station-point of the perspective. He first draws into the date of the station-point of a memory perspective what in the perspective was earlier than the station-point; and

then, as a compensatory feat, he projects this intake backward in time as an 'ideational structure.' For Mead . . . Dewey . . . Lovejoy . . . Strong, everything in the perspective of memory is really in the present . . . the pastness of the past is not the pastness of what has passed, but of what in the present is ideationally passed backward.⁹⁴

This is how they confine memory to the ontologically present.

McGilvary said a "perceptual perspective includes what was physically past," and a "memory perspective includes what was perceptually past." And the "includes" is to be taken in a sense that has no tense in the verb. At a later point in his article he made the distinction but with a difference. In a perceptual spatio-temporal perspective, he said, the physical pastness of what is in the perspective is not given, it is inferred from knowledge gained with regard to the finite speed of physical propagation. In the memory perspective, the perceptual pastness of the remembered object is not inferred, it is given. But it would be an inference that the object remembered had, for example, a different character in the earlier perceptual perspective from what it had in the memory perspective.⁹⁵

I cannot see how this differs fundamentally with the Dewey-Mead position. Why is not McGilvary's "inference" what Mead and Dewey call "ideational structure"? McGilvary's addition of inference supplements his use of "includes" in such a way that it is clear he was not saying we look into the past when we hold that the past is directly present when we know it. The reference to "inference" demonstrates an early tendency on McGilvary's part to bring his realism together with experience philosophies; to supplement his realist theory of perspectives with the experience philosophy theory of inference and context. It should especially be noted that in the process it becomes quite clear that the relativism in his theory is Rel.2 and not the

94. McGilvary, "Perspectives," p.327. 95. Ibid, p.328.

16

ambiguous relativism that results from references to perspective alone. But also in doing this, McGilvary was bringing the two principal strains of objective relativism together and thereby making a significant advance over any statement that is confined to the perspective of either one. There were, of course, those in the strain of pragmatic or experience philosophy who were also seeking a union with their realist counterparts.

In the later treatment of memory in his forthcoming book, McGilvary is more explicit about the impossibility of any physical presence of the past in memory, or knowledge of the past:

. . . in memory the 'recalled' face of an absent friend is, as remembered, the face as of an earlier time. If then the question be asked how can anyone at present reach back physically into a past and get into physical contact with a vanished hand, the answer is that no one can physically do that.⁹⁶

What is more, no one can "physically react to the past. Properly speaking, one reacts from the past." There is retrospection and there is (physical) retroaction. Though the past is beyond our physical reach

it is not beyond our ken, it is not beyond our retrospect. We can ponder over it, we may dislike it, we may hurl our anathemas at it, but we can do nothing about it. But of course what has resulted from the past is still within our physical reach.⁹⁷

McGilvary is now saying that the physical pastness of the perceptual perspective, and the physical pastness of the memory perspective, are both in the perspective by virtue of inference. He thus speaks in the terms of the experience philosophies, for "inference" refers to something more than perception. It is what the organism does with perceptions; it is knowledge. In which case, we do not, in terms of perception alone, account for what is

96. McGilvary, Realism, V, p.41.

97. Ibid, V, p.41a.

actually a result of perception plus inference. The criticisms of Ushenko and Whitehead apply if this distinction is not observed. The use of a cognitive theory of perception for interpretation of knowledge of the past means, in effect, that we look into the past, or that the past literally intrudes into the present.

McGilvary's first postulate--the postulate of direct, naive realism--actually says then that we take our perceptions of the sun, for example, to be the present sun until we learn (and take account of) the knowledge that it takes approximately eight minutes for sunlight to reach the earth. Then we make the distinction between the light as we perceive it and the sun that emitted it eight minutes earlier. But now inferences are involved. Through our knowledge we infer (not just perceive) the pastness of what we are now perceiving. And memory, as McGilvary says, is not different basically. We never naively take our remembering of the past to be itself past, but rather very much present. In "searching one's memory" we are searching something that is present about the past.

I take this to be what Mead means by our making the past out of materials of the present, and what Randall means in his concepts of the "envisaged past" and "envisaged future": "It is the present, and the future operating in the present, that creates the past, and makes history."⁹⁸ And I take it this is what Dewey meant when he restricted our knowledge of the past to the present consequences of past events. For it is upon such consequences that we make our inferences. There are also consequences in the form of our memories. After all, is not a memory of an event one of that event's consequences?

There is good reason to believe that McGilvary at times either did not

98. Randall, "Philosophy," p.462.

fully grasp Mead's notion of making the past, or was working from an assumption that the past was something already made and beyond any significant influence of the present. We are the ones who attribute "pastness" to an event; who think of it, or call it, "past." But this "ideational construction" of a past event is as much a part of that event as the brute physical occurrence. It could be said to be a perspective of that event, or included in the perspective of that event, as well as saying it is made by mind. But McGilvary's notion here is that such a brute happening can be somehow isolated from its present consequences and that is "the past." Thus McGilvary's knowledge of the past, as he interprets it in realistic terms alone, suggests that such an ontological past is present. It is reminiscent of the notion of an antecedent, ready-made object of knowledge held by early realists. However, there is this important difference in McGilvary's thought: his perspectivity made possible a plurality of "pasts," just as it allowed for a plurality of realities, truths, or objectivities. And in many places, especially in his exchange with Dewey, it is clear McGilvary's (and Dewey's!) terminological differences were the real source of some of their differences.

One other point in McGilvary's theory should be mentioned. It has to do with the emphasis on future reference in Dewey's notion that the "distinctive or characteristic aim of judgment" of the past is to give the past content a future reference and function.⁹⁹ This is what Randall refers to:

It is a statement of the historical character of existence to say that what does happen will have become different when it has happened. What it is depends upon what it will be when it has become a past.¹⁰⁰

McGilvary said Dewey was justified in this notion only on the assumption of

99. McGilvary, "Perspectives," pp.328-29 note.

100. Randall, "Philosophy," p.462.

what the "reference and function" of judgment is. He agreed if Dewey was saying naive memory is not a judgment about the past, but would disagree if Dewey denied there is frequently a reference to an earlier perception. That is, there may be an interest in securing a valid judgment as to what the past was when it was present, as well as securing valid judgment as to what the future will be when it becomes present. What judgment is about is what is meant by "reference."¹⁰¹

It would seem that McGilvary the realist hankered after certain structures or permanencies upon which to ground knowledge, rather than "workings," "functions," or "operations." The pragmatic critique, by emphasizing the future, broke away from this view without entirely losing its realism. It held that we act upon our judgments, memories, perceptions and knowledge, and then compare the consequences of so acting with the present environment. Following the comparison we discover how adequate such judgments or perceptions are. Ittelson and Cantril put it this way:

Perceiving . . . provides us with predictions of the significances we will probably encounter in the external world. But we come to grips with externality only by doing something, by acting . . . we discover these significances of the external situation only by experiencing the consequences of our own actions . . . The experienced consequences of every action provide a check on the perceptual prediction on which the action was based.¹⁰²

Neglecting the role of action in perception and knowledge, McGilvary viewed "reference" as a comparison of perceptions with other perceptions, instead of comparing consequences of action with the present situation by means of which the original earlier perceptions are evaluated. We correct our memories, judgments, or knowledge about the past, however, by using the

101. McGilvary, "Perspectives," pp.328-29 note.

102. Ittelson & Cantril, Perception, p.28.

materials of the present and not by bringing the past up to us (or ourselves back to the past). Though we are creatures of the present, we possess the means of transcending its boundaries--not physically, but mentally or "ideationally" in constructing pasts and futures. Pragmatism tore us away from a traditional preoccupation with the antecedent, and directed our attention to the consequents of antecedents.

My point is that McGilvary was under the influence of the realist notion of an antecedent reality--or, as it turns out here, an antecedent past--as something knowledge or judgment is referred to. Thus he says "We can do nothing about it." At another point, however, he agreed "what has resulted from the past" can have something done to it. In this instance he failed to put the two ideas together to see that though the past has this element of the irretrievable about it, it also has as a basic part of its character a controllable element: its results or consequences. In recognizing the existence of "what has resulted from the past," however, McGilvary suggested that the past may not be entirely complete or ready-made. He suggested the same thing in his answer to Lovejoy when he asked if any event, just in its intrinsic nature, is past. Is the pastness of an event, he asked, a character which it has irrespective of all external standpoints?¹⁰³ And his tense-less use of "includes" in saying a perspective can include the physically past, was also a case of bringing together antecedent and consequent.

Still there is reason for questioning whether McGilvary, in his recognition of a continuing aspect about the past, really did mean to bring the realist's world or reality into question. For example, commenting on Dewey's logic, particularly on Dewey's criticisms of the "philosophic

103. McGilvary, "Dualism," pp.252-53.

fallacy" (the "conversion of eventual functions into antecedent existence"), McGilvary held that, on the contrary, this is precisely what science does. The content of the idea that is proved by the issue to have the essential function of bringing about the settled outcome of the inquiry is "converted into antecedent existence." This is a reading back, he agreed, but not into the "preliminary situation, as it was when immediately experienced by" the scientist. He reads them back into "the larger natural world."¹⁰⁴

The same is true of logical forms:

I prefer the postulate that the logical forms that serve to resolve a problematic situation serve that purpose because they are actually the forms of the subject-matter under investigation--not of course of the subject-matter as it was immediately experienced when inquiry started, but as successful inquiry shows the subject-matter to have been in 'the larger natural world' within which it has its setting. Mr. Dewey regards such a position as untenable.¹⁰⁵

In accepting the concept of inquiry, however, McGilvary must also accept the functionalism that says inquiry is the mediating function of an organism in solving a problematic situation. Inquiry is not, then, a disclosure of either what is there now or what is there before. I am not sure McGilvary was aware that he was actually claiming to convert such a function into an antecedent existence.

104. E. B. McGilvary, "Professor Dewey: Logician-Ontologist," in "A Symposium Of Reviews Of John Dewey's 'Logic: The Theory Of Inquiry,'" Journal Of Philosophy, 1939, XXXVI, p.564.

105. Ibid., p.565.

APPENDIX

A MC GILVARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

In addition to the works cited in the general bibliography, there are other articles by E. B. McGilvary pertinent to his objective relativism that I have selected to list here. (This is not to be taken as exhaustive of his works, however.)

Outside of the forthcoming book from Open Court, Professor McGilvary published no books. He did have numerous articles and reviews published, as well as some seventy entries in the 1902 edition of The New International Encyclopedia, New York, Dodd. I found these particularly interesting for the light they shed on McGilvary's early Hegelian orientation.

Most of his book reviews appeared in the Philosophical Review during the time he was at Cornell University, and do not offer much of his own viewpoints.

What appears to be a re-print, in part or in toto, of his thesis on Hegelian Dialectics is "The Principle and the Method of the Hegelian Dialectic," Mind, Jan., 1898, No. 25 (New Series), pp.55-70; Apr., 1898, No. 26, pp.233-42; and July, 1898, No. 27, pp.388-403; and "The Presupposition Question in Hegel's Logic," Philosophical Review, Sept., 1897, VI, pp.497-520.

Almost all of McGilvary's early articles are concerned with ethics, but a series of important papers in 1907 mark a decided shift in his attention to problems of epistemology and metaphysics. These papers include "The Physiological Argument Against Realism," "Prolegomena to a Tentative Realism,"

and "Realism and the Physical World," --all cited in the main bibliography. "Pure Experience and Reality: A Reassertion," Philosophical Review, May, 1907, XVI, pp.266-84, and "The Stream of Consciousness," Journal of Philosophy, April 25, 1907, IV, pp.225-35, round out the year's writings in realism and the problem of consciousness. McGilvary was taking a thoroughgoing realistic approach, not only using as his starting point Neo-realism, James and Woodbridge, but also seeking to bring the Chicago group of philosophers into his considerations. It is this attempt to bring together realism and idealism under the influence of an Hegelian inheritance that accounts for his ultimate objective relativism.

In the following years McGilvary's papers display his attempt to find a rapport with idealism. Pragmatism, the "Chicago 'Idea' and Idealisms," theories of experience in James and Dewey, all come under his scrutiny. Some of the more outstanding articles of this time were "Experience and Its Inner Duplicity," Journal of Philosophy, Apr. 29, 1909, VI, pp.225-32, in which he dealt with the nature of the consciousness relation; "Experience as Pure and Consciousness as Meaning," Journal of Philosophy, Sept. 14, 1911, VIII, pp.511-25, in which he dealt more explicitly with the James and Woodbridge theories of consciousness. "Realism and the Ego-Centric Predicament," Philosophical Review, May, 1912, XXI, pp.351-6 answers Dewey's writings on the predicament with McGilvary's interpretation of Perry. "The Relation of Consciousness and Object in Sense-Perception," Philosophical Review, March, 1912, XXI, pp.152-73 sets forth McGilvary's theory of consciousness as "a unique and not further analyzable relation of togetherness," and examines epistemological monism and realism. This brought replies from Thilly, Lovejoy and Miller. "Time and the Experience of Time," Philosophical Review, March, 1914, XXIII, pp.121-45, his Presidential Address to the American Philosophical Association, is part of McGilvary's "taking time seriously."

There is a gap in the writings from 1918 until 1926 at which time his papers now are distinctly under the influence of what must have been McGilvary's work in mathematical physics during the hiatus. There are papers dealing now with Relativity Theory and the general problem of philosophy and science. And with few exceptions this is the tenor of all of McGilvary's articles from there on. For example, there are articles like "Newtonian Time and Einsteinian Times" in Brightman ed., Proceedings of the 6th International Congress of Philosophy, New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 1927, pp.47-53; "The Lorentz Transformations and Space-Time," Journal of Philosophy, June 19, 1941, XXXVIII, pp.337-49; and the exchange with Lovejoy over the "time-retarding journey."

My citations in the text do not by any means exhaust the manuscript of Toward a Perspective Realism. In addition to his epiphysical or epidynamic theory of consciousness, McGilvary takes up the general problem of relations, the mind-body problem, experience, and a quite extensive portion of the manuscript is devoted to the whole question of consciousness.

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